

Georgia

Caregiver Name: Juju
Age at Implantation: 11 Months

Child: Shio
Age Today: 2 Years



This is the story of my super boy, Shio, and I am his mom. It is an honour to share his journey — one that has reshaped our understanding of resilience, hope, and the remarkable abilities of children. Shio was born prematurely at 34 weeks and faced significant health challenges from his first days of life. He spent his first three months in the NICU. On the day he was finally discharged, we were informed that his newborn's hearing screening had not been completed. Because of several risk factors, doctors advised us that he had a high likelihood of hearing loss and urgently needed evaluation. From that moment, our lives became filled with uncertainty. We questioned every sound, every reaction, every movement. We constantly wondered: Did he hear that? Did he respond to my voice? We searched for reassurance in the smallest signs. Shio failed five rapid screening tests. We continued to hope, but when he was eight months old, we received the final diagnosis: bilateral profound hearing loss.

That day felt devastating. It seemed as though the future we had imagined disappeared instantly. We felt overwhelmed and unprepared, with no prior expectations or understanding of hearing technology or support systems. After a few difficult days, we began researching and discovered our local hearing support centre. Reaching out to them became a turning point — a small but powerful light during an extremely dark time.

At an institution, we learned about our options and ultimately chose to pursue a cochlear implant. One of the most meaningful aspects of this process was connecting with people who truly understood our experience. The centre's director is also the parent of a child with a cochlear implant. We educated ourselves about cochlear implants, prepared for surgery, and joined a large support community of parents walking a similar path. Reading their stories provided comfort, solidarity, and hope.

The day of Shio's activation marked a profound change in our lives. It remains one of the most unforgettable moments we have experienced. From that point forward, every day felt like a new discovery. Gradually, Shio began recognizing voices, understanding words, enjoying music, and developing a deep love for book reading—still his favourite activity today.

Shio is now almost three years old. He understands everything around him, loves to play, and enjoys listening to people. Our next goal is to hear his first words. It is taking longer than we expected, but we are waiting patiently and with hope. We continue to walk a demanding road filled with daily therapy sessions, knowing that each small step in his development is meaningful. This journey is long and, at times, challenging, but we are confident it is the right one. We are moving steadily toward the full, independent life we want for our son.

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary technology of cochlear implants. This innovation opened a world that once felt unreachable for our family. Because of it, Shio can explore sound,

language, and connection in ways we once feared he might never experience. We carry immense gratitude for the technology, the professionals behind it, and the community that supports families like ours.

With time, our fear gave way to belief. We began to see that Shio's future was not limited; it was filled with possibilities. **Looking back, I would tell myself—and any parent facing a similar journey—never lose faith.** Children possess extraordinary strength and adaptability. Their potential often exceeds what we can imagine.

Our children are fighters. They are capable, determined, and inspiring. They remind us of every day that challenges do not define them, courage does.