

South Africa

Caregiver Name: She-Attel
Age at Implantation: 11 months

Child: Kyana
Age Today: 7

Kyana was born at 38 weeks. This was a normal pregnancy without any complications. There is no family history of hereditary diseases. At the age of 3 months, Kyana was admitted to the hospital with bacterial meningitis. Two months later she underwent a bilateral “refer” hearing test and was referred for a diagnostic audiological assessment a month later. That summer, we unexpectedly received the diagnosis that Kyana has a bilateral extreme sensorineural hearing loss. Kyana was only 6 months old when she was fitted with bilateral hearing aids and referred for intervention. She was also referred as a possible cochlear implant candidate. A month later, Kyana began rehabilitation at the Centre. Initially, they had weekly sessions (twice a week), and they also received tele-intervention during the Covid pandemic.

In February 2020, Kyana was fitted with a cochlear implant in her right ear. In September 2021, it was felt that Kyana needed more structure and daily intervention from the Centre, so in October 2021 **we packed a bag and moved to a residential home for weekly intervention sessions.**

I was facing lots of challenges physically, emotionally and financially. It was a whole new world that opened for us. It was a new challenge after receiving her cochlear implant. When she was diagnosed and was a candidate for an implant, it was the first time I heard of a cochlear implant and was scared at first. After seeing kids with them and hearing other people's stories, it motivated me knowing that she will have the ability to hear even if she's deaf.



It was a struggle financially knowing that the procedure is quite expensive and the cost of maintaining the cochlear implant is high. My greatest support was the people and parents I met at the Centre. People that know what it is like to be a parent of a child that has a cochlear implant. We share a great bond and support each other a lot.

When she was first switched on was the greatest day of my life. Watching her when she really started hearing my voice and different sounds was an amazing moment.

My advice to parents is to do what is best for their child and accept that what their child is going through will make the healing process better. Moving to be near her school where she can have better access was the best decision I made. Having her near and around children with cochlear implants and being in the best school where she learns and experiences a lot is great.