

South Africa

Caregiver Name: Singathwa
Age at Implantation: 2

Child: Mbali
Age Today: 13



Mbali was born hearing, until she got sick when she was 3 months old with meningitis, to which she lost her hearing. We went to the hospital and were referred to a professional who told us about cochlear implants, and we decided this would be the best decision. She got the cochlear implant when she was 2 years old and at that time, she was not producing any speech. After the cochlear implant, she learned to hear and speak with the help of resources from a clinic.

My biggest challenge was the language. She had to go to an English school, but my family is Xhosa, so we also had to learn English. It was not easy because my mother-in-law also did not speak English, so it was difficult for us to communicate with her.

My greatest support has been from one of our hearing centres, when I was working long hours in the retail industry, they helped tremendously. My nanny did not know how to speak English to my

child, so I asked for a cleaning job at the centre so that I could learn how to help my child hear and speak. The centre gave me the opportunity to be at Mbali's school to learn how to support her, also allowing us to go home early so we could spend more time practicing.

The greatest achievement my child has accomplished was her learning to hear and speak, especially in a school with hearing children. The cochlear implant brought her hearing back, allowing her to be in the same grade as her peers.

My advice to parents is never give up on your children. It does not matter where you come from, who you are, if you get opportunity for your child to get cochlear implant, grab that opportunity with both hands because that could change your child's life forever. I am a mother who is coming from a family with many disadvantages but that did not stop my child from getting the cochlear implant. Yes, it is expensive to maintain, and it is a lifelong commitment because once your child can hear, they will never want to go back.

Thank you, cochlear implant, for changing lives. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the cochlear implant that has transformed my child's life, enabling her to hear and communicate with the world. The impact is immeasurable, and I am committed to supporting her through every step of this journey, ensuring she gets the best care and opportunities to thrive with her new hearing ability.