

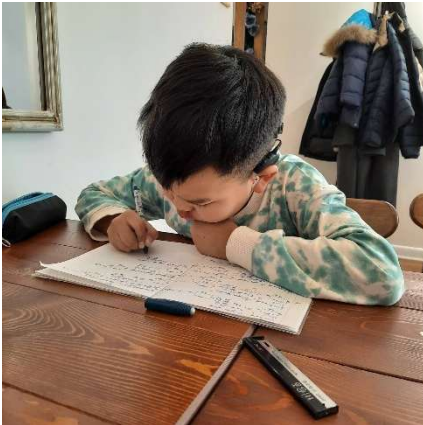
MONGOLIA

Caregiver Name: Etkhtuul
Age at Implantation: 2 & 6

Child: Zorig
Age Today: 12

Years ago, during a traditional Lunar New Year family visit, a relative casually asked about our toddler son, who had not spoken a word: “Could he be deaf?” That simple question marked the beginning of a life-changing journey for our family.

Medical evaluations soon confirmed significant hearing loss. At first, we did not understand what this truly meant. We compared it to needing glasses — something that could simply be corrected. But we learned that hearing loss affects far more than sound, it influences language, learning, social connection, and a child’s sense of belonging. Like many parents around the world, we suddenly had to face fear, confusion, and uncertainty about our child’s future.



Guided by dedicated doctors, we learned about cochlear implants. Accessing care, understanding options, and making decisions felt overwhelming, yet timing was critical. Early intervention would shape our son’s ability to develop spoken language. With professional support and the help of many people, our son received his first cochlear implant before age two. He heard sound for the first time — a quiet miracle that changed everything.

But surgery was only the beginning.

Like families everywhere, we discovered that rehabilitation — the daily work after implantation — required constant effort. Consistent device use, auditory-verbal therapy, communication practice, and emotional support became part of everyday life. I paused my career to focus on his development, and we followed medical guidance closely. Small milestones — turning toward sound, humming along with music — became victories we celebrated deeply.

Progress brought hope, but also anxiety. I often wondered whether we were doing enough, whether he would keep up with peers, and whether he would feel different. These questions are shared by parents of children with hearing loss worldwide, regardless of country or culture.

Before starting school, our son received a second implant, allowing him to hear with both ears. Bilateral hearing improved his speech understanding and confidence. **On his first day of school, he came home smiling and said, “I can learn.” That moment reflected not only his achievement, but years of medical care, rehabilitation, family commitment, and educational support.**

Today, he is a confident middle school student, respected by classmates and proud of his accomplishments. Yet we know many families worldwide still struggle with limited access to early diagnosis, surgery, devices, mapping services, therapy, and inclusive education. Even when technology is available, the emotional, financial, and practical demands on families are immense.

Our experience taught us important lessons we share with other parents: early action matters. Trust professional guidance. Ensure consistent device use. Speak with your child constantly. Encourage independence. Celebrate small progress. And just as importantly — support yourself as a parent. This journey requires strength, patience, and hope.

Cochlear implants do more than provide access to sound. They open doors to language, education, friendships, and participation in society. But no family should walk this path alone. Medical teams, educators, communities, and global organizations are essential to ensuring children receive not only implants, but also the rehabilitation, and long-term support needed to thrive.

We are deeply grateful to the medical professionals who guided us and extend our heartfelt appreciation to the educators who supported our son's inclusion. Their patience, encouragement, and belief in his abilities helped him grow academically, socially, and emotionally.



Their work does more than restore hearing — it restores hope, dignity, opportunity, and connection.

Our son now fills our home with laughter and music — sounds we once feared we might never hear. His story is ours, but also part of a global story shared by families everywhere: one of challenge, resilience, partnership, and the transformative power of early intervention and collective care.