

## One Families Experience with Newborn Hearing Screening

Cora Shahid and Naseer Naseer– Proud Parents of Zain

On May 30th 2004 we were anxiously awaiting the arrival of our little baby. Immediately following the delivery, I heard my husband asking the doctor, "Is it a boy or a girl?" She replied "A BOY!" Our entire family rejoiced! We now had a daughter and a son. That day was full of excitement and joy and the following day we received news that would forever change our entire family's life.



On the second day of my son's life a nurse walked into our hospital room, sat in a chair and told us that our baby had not passed the Newborn Hearing test. I asked how that could be? What does that mean? She assured me that this is common when a baby does not pass the test, typically when they come back for their follow up in 3 weeks they will pass so not to worry. The pediatrician who was caring for our son in the hospital also assured us that there could be fluid in the ears and not to worry. But how can two parents not worry about their newborn baby?

While we were waiting for our sons follow up appointment we had good days where we knew that the test was wrong and that the next test would show normal hearing, but we also had days where we were scared. We cried and worried about our sweet babies future. When we returned for his follow up hearing test he was 3 weeks old and the Nurse who administrated the hearing test was unable to give us any information other than we needed to follow up. She set up an appointment for us to have an ABR.

We were asked to not allow our son to nap before his test and to arrange his feedings so that he would eat and fall asleep for the test. During the test our son would occasionally fidget, so I thought to myself, *Oh, Thank God, he hears the sounds so everything is ok.* After 1 1/2 hours of testing the audiologist walked in and said, "We are done for today I have enough information. I can give you the results of the test." The audiologist gently informed us that our baby boy does indeed have a moderate to severe hearing loss. Although we had a few weeks to get used to the idea that our son may not hear we were still in shock. The audiologist showed us a photo of an ear and explained sensorinueral hearing loss, yet we still felt lost and wished that we had more information to take home in our hands. How many other families have heard this news? Where are they? Where do we get more information?

The first time I saw the hearing aids on my sons ears was the day I started to realize that this is really true and that our son does have a hearing loss. In the last five years, I have met so many incredible people that have supported me and gently guided me along the way. Although the first days and weeks of my son's life were emotional and wonderful, I am grateful that my son was identified at birth. I joined statewide parent organizations, national organizations, met families online, called the deaf community center in my area and attended monthly events for families with deaf children. I am grateful to all of the support that surrounds my family. With everyone's support, our son is age at or above age appropriate in all areas, including language. He plays on community soccer teams, he rides bikes, he has a ton of friends, he tells great jokes, he swims, he fights with his sister, he brings me flowers from our garden and he tells me he loves me every single day. Each and every step of the way is a new branch to the tree of raising a deaf or hard of hearing child and just like with life, you are never finished learning all there is to know about raising a happy, successful, independent deaf or hard of hearing child.

Our son, like your son/daughter, can do anything with your support. The sky truly is the limit for your child.

Congratulations!



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