

## Kreger Family

Having a child was the single-greatest moment of my life. Looking at her sweet face and holding her in our arms was indescribable. Nothing could be more perfect. When the nurses came to take my precious girl for the Newborn Hearing Screening, we were assured that it was protocol and they would return soon. I was asleep when the nurses returned to explain that our little girl “failed” the test in her left ear. As two teachers, we heard the word “failed” and were immediately concerned. They explained that it was quite common and that they would test her the following evening. Until then we were on pins and needles. What if something was wrong? What does it mean? With all of the nerves, worries, and fears that new parents have, this was not something that we planned for. The second evening we were informed that she “failed” in her left ear once again, but that she was “very close” to passing. My husband and I were given a referral to an audiologist and told to make an appointment for two-weeks out in case it was simply fluid in her ears. A million questions raced through our minds as we waited to see the audiologist.

After two weeks we went to Royal Oak Beaumont and visited the Audiology Department for her first ABR. The test seemed to last an eternity and waiting for the results was even worse. Our daughter was diagnosed with a mild/moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing impairment. From there it was a complete whirlwind of meeting with audiologists, speaking with Early On, and trying to find the plan of care that would work for her. She was almost two months old at this point and we were learning conflicting information from a variety of audiologists, stating that she did not need to be aided at this point or that she absolutely needed to have aids in order for her to be on par with her normal hearing peers. We were overwhelmed and felt like fish out of water. My husband and I are both high school teachers who work with students who have disabilities, yet we were completely uneducated when it came to helping our precious daughter. We needed to have clear answers and we did not. We needed to be her advocates, yet we had no idea how to do that.

It was at that moment when her teacher consultant and audiologist came to my home for our first meeting. They were from the hearing impaired program housed out of Trenton Public Schools. They are the reason that my daughter is progressing and doing as well as she is today. Their guidance and know-how helped me to get in touch with the otolaryngology and audiology departments at C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital in Ann Arbor, and by three months of age my daughter had her first set of hearing aids. They were absolutely adorable with hot pink ear molds. It was such a blessing to meet these amazing women that so selflessly provide comfort, counseling, and knowledge to families struggling to understand how to support their hearing-impaired children.



We cannot imagine what life would be like if it were not for the Newborn Hearing Screening process. My husband and I are thankful every day that the nurses at Troy Beaumont were able to detect my daughter’s hearing impairment the night she was born, and we were able to problem-solve and strategize to get her the supports that she needs. Hearing is something that many of us take for granted and we are delighted that we are able to provide my daughter the opportunity to hear all of the joyous noise that life has to offer.