



Feisty & Spirited

A MinneStory™

Liz and Terry share their journey of navigating their daughter Ainslee's hearing loss. Together they are learning the ins and outs of hearing aids, advocacy, and celebrating the everyday wins.



Liz: So Ainslee.

Terry: So Ainslee. (Laughs.) We should describe Ainslee a little bit. How would you describe Ainslee?

Liz: Spirited, feisty, like her dad. (Laughs.) Like you. Well, I guess we could start when she was born. The nurse came in with our cart, and I was getting ready to leave the hospital. And she said, "Everything's good but one thing: She didn't pass her newborn screening, not a big deal." In my mind I was – if she says it's not a big deal, I'm not going to worry about it.

Terry: And I was obsessed with the fact that she didn't pass her newborn hearing screen. So I really worried about it.

Liz: Do you remember how many times you tried to see if she could hear?

Terry: Over that month I ...

Liz: Clapped.

Terry: I clapped. I would do all sorts of stuff, drop books, and in fact, she did respond to some of those things. So that comforted me a little. But I wish I could have seen a 5-minute clip of her at 5 years old, and all of my worries would have completely gone away because, literally, Ainslee does not ever be quiet. And I would never at this point tell her to be quiet because it was my biggest hope that she would be able to talk one day.

Liz: I remember after her ABR when Laura, her audiologist from Children's, told us that, you know, she does have hearing loss, and how you knew it was a possibility, but you always grasp onto that hope that it was a false positive. And then taking the next step, you know, the hearing aid. And here was this little 3-month-old with a hearing aid, you know, and how do you hold her, and then the next step.

Terry: I remember the first word, and I'm sure Ainslee said other first words other than this. But I remember watching a Vikings game, and they had scored, and I yelled, "Touchdown!" And she was in the other room and she walked in, and she goes, "Touchdown!"

Liz: (Laughs.)

Terry: And so that was really the first time that I remember her talking, and it was such a good feeling that because she was a late talker anyway a little bit, compared to Aiden our son, that sometimes I thought, is she ever going to talk?

Liz: Right. And now ...

Terry: And now she just won't ever be quiet.

Liz: And I remember telling you, be careful what you wish for. And my big thing I remember when she was younger is taking care of her hearing aids.

Terry: And we were really diligent, because we realized that is how she hears and, if she doesn't have those in, she will not get the information that the rest of the world is getting through sound. So it's very difficult to put hearing aids into a three-month-old sometimes.

Liz: Right. And keep them in.

Terry: She went through a period where she wore little...

Liz: Pilot hats.

Terry: Pilot hats on top of her head. And so a lot of our pictures from that period she has ...

Liz: Yeah.

Terry: ... pilot hats on. (Laughs.)

Liz: Yeah, to keep ... Cuz she would take out her – you know, they just grab at anything. It has become so routine to put her hearing aids in. And now she's such an advocate for herself that I forget sometimes that. It's so much part of her.

Terry: Right.

Liz: It's Ainslee.

Terry: She's a feisty little 5-year-old, and I'm waiting for the day when she's a teenager and doesn't want to listen to us, and she pulls everything out and says, now what are you going to do, dad? (Laughs.)

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