

**Jenny's Summer Holidays and her new FM system.**



Jenny has had her cochlear implant for 12 months now and has an FM system in school but this has not been available for use out of school. During the summer holidays Jenny used an FM system which we borrowed from the 'Blue Peter' loan service.

We have made a note of the many situations where we have used it so far during the summer holidays and noted the difference it has made.

Some of the instances where there has been a clear definite benefit to Jennifer's ability to hear are where the background noise is too loud and acoustic conditions very difficult. Specific examples include visiting Bowness in The Lake District where pavements just disappear and lorries thunder round corners with little warning. Jenny couldn't hear what we were saying and so we put the radio aid on and she was able to clearly hear us when we asked her to hold our hand, stop by the pavement, be careful of the car etc. It turned the trip around from being an impossibly dangerous to one which was much easier to manage and improved safety dramatically.

We stayed in the Halls of Residence for a DELTA summer school (Deaf education through listening and talking) at Lancaster University. The kitchen was huge and had fully tiled walls and floors with lots of electrical equipment. Jenny found it very hard to listen in these conditions due to the reverberant noise. The radio aid enabled us to have nice chats whilst we were eating our meals.

We travel an awful lot as many families with deaf children do to attend medical, speech and language, education appointments etc. Our travelling includes regular visits to AV UK in Oxford and to Southampton. Car journeys can be very difficult as the background noise of our diesel engine combined with air conditioning makes it very challenging for Jenny to hear. Jenny will often become frustrated when talking in the car and she often asks you to turn your head towards her so she can lip read as well to try to make out what you are saying. Consequently journeys often become hard work and dangerous as much motorway driving is required. Recently I used the radio aid when travelling to AV UK and the whole experience was completely different. We were able to chat quite happily all the way there without me having to take my eyes off the road or repeat what I was saying. The effect on Jenny was that she was a happy little girl and understood what was happening. I also arrived much calmer and enjoyed the experience a lot more.

Shopping trips are also benefiting from the use of a radio aid. Despite huge shopping malls and lots of background noise I'm able to talk ahead and this offers many benefits. First of all it improves her behaviour dramatically as I'm able to explain to her clearly about what we are going to do and she can perhaps choose one toy and not three! We also have very meaningful spontaneous chats which you can't always practically do when you have to bend down close to her ear for her to hear what you are saying. The whole "shopping experience" becomes a lot more natural and a lot more fun!

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