



■ Rhett rides on: Cochlear implants open up new worlds for kids

If you want to ask Rhett about his cochlear implants, you'll have to catch him first! This dirt-biking preschooler doesn't let hearing loss slow him down. Rhett had his [cochlear implant surgery](#) at [Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas](#), where he was also cared for by our [Ear, Nose and Throat \(ENT\)](#) and [Hearing and Speech](#) teams.

At his 18-month checkup, Rhett was only saying three words. His mom knew something was wrong and worked with Rhett's pediatrician to get more testing. Specialists confirmed that Rhett had profound sensorineural hearing loss in both ears and needed cochlear implants to hear.

"[ENT](#) and [Hearing and Speech](#) work together to provide the best care possible to our cochlear implant patients, whether it's at our Kansas or Missouri location," said [Sandy Keener, AuD, Director of Hearing and Speech](#). "Families can typically choose which location is most convenient for them, and we can usually accommodate their needs."

Now, Rhett communicates with both spoken word and American Sign Language (ASL), depending on his mood, and celebrates his real birthday and his hearing birthday.

"Rhett is currently going to [speech therapy](#) twice a week and has been a sponsored motocross rider for the past few months," said his mom, Desert. "He loves to do anything outdoors. We attended our first cochlear implant meet and greet in April in Kansas City and had a blast. Overall, he's been doing great!"

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SANDRA KEENER, CCC-A, AuD

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