

SWEET TALK: Baby Savannah faces challenges after being diagnosed as deaf at eight weeks of age, but Kilsyth mum Melinda says her progress has been extraordinary thanks to an eastern suburbs oral language centre.

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Picture: CARMELO BAZZANO/N15LE203



School helps her find her voice



Savannah and mum Melinda Ochoa. Picture: CARMELO BAZZANO N15LE203

Health | Emily Webb

WHEN Kilsyth toddler Savannah Ochoa points to her feet and says "shoe" it is a major achievement.

The 19-month-old was found to be deaf when she was eight weeks through a newborn hearing screening and was fitted with hearing aids soon after.

Mum Melinda said her daughter's speech development had been enhanced by her attendance at Blackburn-based Taralye, an oral language centre for hearing-impaired children from birth to six years.

The Ochoa family is raising money for the centre through Loud Shirt Day on Friday, October 21.

Loud Shirt Day is an initiative of First Voice, the national peak

body for organisations whose primary focus is providing listening and spoken language therapy services for hearing-impaired children.

"We owe a lot to Taralye," Mrs Ochoa said. "It was a real shock when we found out Savannah was deaf but she is doing really well and Taralye has been a great support."

Mrs Ochoa, who has three young sons with husband Alex, said Savannah was profoundly deaf in her right ear and had about 30 per cent hearing in her left ear.

"We have our hands full and Savannah is a really social, confident little girl," Mrs Ochoa said.

► To donate go to loudshirtday.gofundraise.com.au/page/MelindaOchoa