

News release

22nd December 2009

Sunderland Toddler Hears Sound of Progress

A Sunderland mum has praised the city's Children's Centres for the support her family has received after her son faced major surgery to restore his hearing and for the substantial progress he has made as a result.

Harvey Minto, aged two from Thorney Close, has been regularly visiting the Sensory Playroom at Sunderland Children's Centre, Highfield, since February this year. He underwent cochlear implant surgery four months ago. Thanks to the facilities at the Children's Centre, which stimulate Harvey's senses, he has been making impressive developments.

Since the implants have been switched on, Lyndsay Mascoll (19) says her son has been making a lot more noise and vocalising sounds during his sessions at the Sensory Playroom. By using the light and sound toys at Sunderland Children's Centre Highfield he is now beginning to recognise the names of colours and differentiate between sounds.

Lyndsay said: "It has been a difficult two years working through Harvey's deafness, but to see him making such huge progress is really amazing. I have to give full credit to the staff at the Children's Centre who have really supported my family throughout all this.

"Through Highfield's Sensory Play sessions Harvey has made such an improvement, even over the space of less than a year. His dad Steven and I have also learnt sign language through classes at the centre so we can communicate better with Harvey when he is old enough to start signing himself.

"He is a different child now, he gets involved in everything. He's totally fearless and he has opened up to playing with other children, while he's at the Children's Centre" she finished.

Councillor Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City within Sunderland City Council, said: "Harvey and his family have been incredibly brave in coping with both his disability and the major surgery he's been through. I am very proud that the city's Children's Centres have been able to provide so much help to support them".

There are 17 Sunderland Children's Centres located across the city. Designed to support families through their children's development, from the prenatal stage right through to age five, Children's Centres bring together health services, play and learn activities, early education, childcare and parenting support as well as and help for parents looking to find work or training opportunities – helping to ensure that every child has the best start in life.