

Early Childhood Intervention

Emanuella's story



How early childhood intervention is getting five year old Emanuella ready for school.



Emanuella (right) and sister Angelique (left)

Emanuella's story

Five year old Emanuella is a vibrant and determined young girl who loves being with her sisters. Emanuella is on the autism spectrum which affects her communication, language and social skills. With these challenges in mind, and an important transition from pre-school to primary school ahead, Emanuella's Mum wants to ensure she has the best chance of making friends, and is able to concentrate, learn, and enjoy the school environment.

Mum was referred to CPA by a trusted friend, and Emanuella now sees Praveena, CPA speech pathologist, twice a week to work on her communication, language and social skills. Each day her family see improvement and have noticed a big difference since she's been seeing Praveena. Emanuella is now able to express herself so much better, and her focus sitting down and concentrating on activities is improving.

Emanuella's challenges

When the family first came to CPA, Mum was concerned Emanuella wasn't meeting the same communication and play milestones that her sisters did at a similar age. Her attention was very limited, she was unable to express herself using full sentences, and she had trouble understanding and following instructions.

Praveena agreed that Emanuella needed some early intervention supports to accelerate her learning to the level required for her to participate on an even playing field at school.

To support this goal, Mum and Praveena agreed part of the intervention plan would include twice weekly speech therapy sessions and school visits. Given change is particularly challenging for children with autism, the planned school visits will help familiarise Emanuella with her new classroom, teachers, facilities and building, while minimising the impact of change and any associated stress and sensory overload. School visits will also be used to help teachers understand and work with Emanuella's current communication style.

Praveena is also working towards Emanuella being able to sit down, join someone else in an activity, share attention with another person, express her needs and wants, and be able to understand things that other people are saying around her, as well as to play with things functionally and independently like other children her age.

Future goals

Emanuella is having great success with the intensive intervention she is currently receiving. Both Mum and Praveena feel she is making progress in leaps and bounds, with her verbal communication, language comprehension, social and play skills all improving.

To continue building on her achievements, some of the future goals and supports planned for next year include:

- **Intensive therapy** - continuing with intensive therapy as this is proving to be effective.
- **Assistive technology** – while Emanuella is verbal, Praveena feels she will benefit from some assistive technology to support her further at school.
- **Occupational therapy** - Praveena will continue to work collaboratively with Emanuella's occupational therapist to ensure all of her sensory needs are met.



Emanuella's progress

Emanuella's biggest achievement since she began early intervention at CPA is her ability to sit and engage in a session. Emanuella understands her therapy structure and is happy to attend sessions. She greets Praveena when she arrives, says goodbye at the end, and voluntarily sits at the table and engages throughout her session, all of which are huge milestones.

Since using visuals to work on her language and limited attention span, Emanuella's ability to follow instructions, listen, and understand is significantly improving. And, she's also now able to express her needs and wants using two to three word phrases spontaneously, instead of needing prompts.

Praveena has also been working on pretend play with Emanuella, and she is much more interested and even starting to play on her own.

“Play is so important for a child’s development and social skills, as well as being fun. It’s how they learn. Play builds connections in the brain, helping neuroplasticity, so it’s wonderful that Emanuella is starting to enjoy the benefits, and will now be able to play with her sisters and friends at school,” said Praveena.

Given the effectiveness of the early intervention on Emanuella's development, Praveena and Mum now feel much more confident that Emanuella is on the right track to transition to school and keep up with her peers.



Emanuella's goals



Communication skills:
language and speech



Social skills



Play skills



Transition to school



Emanuella's outcomes

Through speech therapy Emanuella's communication, language, social and play skills have significantly improved.

She now:



Engages in therapy sessions



Uses much more spontaneous language



Understands language and follows instructions



Expresses her needs



Plays independently

Why choose CPA for early intervention?

Easy to get started

Mum was referred to CPA through a friend, and the following week Emanuella had her first speech therapy and occupational therapy session.

“The process all happened really quickly and couldn’t have been easier, at the time we were really raw and coming to terms with the diagnosis of autism,” said Mum.

Experts in early childhood intervention

All CPA therapists are specialists in supporting children with a range of physical and neurological conditions through occupational therapy, speech pathology and physiotherapy. The therapies Emanuella is receiving are backed by world-renowned evidence-based research, proven to deliver results.

“One of the things I love about working at CPA is that we can give each client a very holistic approach, and I think they’re more likely to meet functional goals if we’re working collaboratively as a team. We’re all working in the same dynamic under one roof, so conversations naturally happen, and we’re able to discuss the best outcomes for our clients,” said Praveena.

Holistic support for the whole family

The whole family is involved in Emanuella’s intervention. She comes in twice a week to CPA’s centre in South West Sydney with her Mum and often her sisters. Praveena works collaboratively with the whole family to support Emanuella’s communication needs and encourage consistency at home. Mum feels the whole family is being supported to help Emanuella continue to build on her skills.

“They all made us feel welcome. It wasn’t that CPA was just helping Emanuella, they were helping the whole family. They gave us emotional support with comfort, encouragement, counselling and guidance, and practical support, by helping us practise the application of techniques so we can keep going at home”, said Mum.

“I try to incorporate the family as much as possible into the therapy sessions and get them doing hands on things with Emanuella, so they have encouragement, support, confidence and skills to help build on with Emanuella,” said Praveena.

Start your journey with us today and let us help your child become the person they’re really meant to be.

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