Early Childhood Intervention

Ruby and Izaac’s story

How early childhood intervention is helping Ruby and Izaac to thrive.
Ruby’s challenges

The main challenge Lisa wanted to address was helping Ruby prepare for her transition to school by improving her language skills. Ruby found it difficult to be understood, so improving speech would ready her for school, enable her to engage with peers, make friends and learn. Ruby, her carers and teachers are learning strategies to regulate her sensory systems so she can stay calm and focused. Improved focus and attention to task will help Ruby to learn essential cognitive and fine motor skills in preparation for school. Ruby’s main therapy goals are focused on helping to improve her speech clarity so she is easier to understand and can communicate her needs, increase engagement with peers and improve participation in age-appropriate social interactions.

Ruby’s progress

Ruby has made amazing progress and people are starting to understand her speech. Ruby was way behind with her words and speech, and while she is understood by her therapist and Lisa, she struggled to be understood by other people. Ruby is a tenacious girl and has learnt what is expected of her in therapy and how to engage in table-top activities for longer. She has also learnt some auditory discrimination skills. Being able to differentiate between sounds will help her to understand how to speak more clearly and be more easily understood.

Physiotherapy has helped to improve Ruby’s core strength allowing her to sit for extended periods, which will help her concentrate in the classroom. Ruby now walks less on her toes, and, as a result, is strong enough to be able to engage in a greater range of physical activities. Lisa observed that Ruby is starting to enjoy her physio sessions, and the calming sensory stimulation she receives during these is addressing her ADHD and assisting her to focus. For example, performing activities simultaneously like rolling on an exercise ball while doing something else really channels her concentration.

All of this incredible progress is helping to make Ruby a happier and more confident little girl. She is now looking forward to going to school and her newfound skills will, no doubt, help make school life easier and more enjoyable.

Ruby and Izaac’s story

Fun-loving Izaac and his energetic sister Ruby may have some challenges to conquer, but with Mum, Lisa, and the CPA therapy team behind them, both siblings are making great progress. Five-year-old Ruby is a delightful and friendly girl with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder. Ruby needs support to improve her speech, focus and attention, and to regulate her emotions so she can feel happy and confident at primary school, be able make lots of friends and enjoy playing with them.

Like all three-year-olds, Izaac loves to play, but has difficulty using his left arm and communicating his needs. His diagnosis of chromosome two deletion and global developmental delay can hold him back from joining in the fun, but he is a cheeky, determined boy who wants to interact. His family and CPA therapists are determined to find a way for him to communicate with others and concentrate on activities for longer.

Lisa is delighted to have found all the therapy services her children need under one roof. Both Ruby and Izaac visit a multi-disciplinary team at CPA’s Tuggerah campus, including a speech pathologist, occupational therapist and physiotherapist.

We spoke to Lisa, about how Ruby and Izaac’s therapy is progressing and what she’s hoping they’ll achieve in the future to become their best selves.
Izaac’s challenges
Lisa’s main goal was for speech therapy to help Izaac to communicate in some way so his fun personality could really shine. Izaac doesn’t yet have any verbal communication so Maxine (CPA speech pathologist) has been encouraging him to use sign language. Lisa has noticed a massive change in Izaac already and is thankful that they started early with his intervention. Although Izaac’s goals may seem smaller than Ruby’s, Lisa recognises the importance of improving his communication skills setting him up for reaching further goals in the future.

Izaac’s progress
The great news is Izaac can now use basic signs to communicate what he needs, for example asking for a drink or needing the toilet. Izaac has also learned to engage in new activities for longer and to recognise that photos represent objects, which is a huge milestone in his development. This is one of the first steps for learning to use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Both of these achievements have helped Izaac interact more socially within sessions. Additionally, Izaac has started saying single words and his preschool teachers have noticed a boost in his communication. All of these improvements help Izaac to express himself in his own cheeky way, and play with his big sister and peers.

Izaac’s physiotherapy sessions have set up the environment for him to engage more, as well as challenging his movement skills. These sessions also aim to give Lisa ideas on ways she can work on developing his skills at home, as the time between appointments is vital in building skills, strength and coordination. Lisa has also observed that Izaac’s muscle tone, strength and coordination have improved and is delighted about that.

The focus now is to continue physio to further improve Izaac’s muscle tone, strength and coordination so he will be better balanced when walking, have more stability and control when going up and down stairs, and manage walking on different surfaces and negotiating obstacles – so he can keep up with Ruby and his peers while playing!

Ruby’s goals
- Improve speech clarity for communication and socialisation
- Improve focus and attention
- Learn strategies to regulate sensory systems, stay calm and focused
- Successfully transition to mainstream primary school

Ruby’s outcomes
- Speech clarity improvement
- Better communication skills
- Improved core strength and gross motor skills
- Engages in physical activity and play
- Improved concentration to task
- Writing skills

Izaac’s goals
- Communicate his wants and needs
- Follow a visual schedule to assist him to attend to task for longer periods
- To use his left hand to play with toys
- Improve stability

Izaac’s progress
- Responds to and uses key word signs
- Improved muscle tone, strength and coordination
- Uses his left arm and hand to play
- Follows a visual schedule of 2–3 activities
- Play skills
Why choose CPA for early childhood intervention?

All under one roof
Before engaging CPA as a service provider, Lisa was seeing a local area health provider for occupational therapy, speech pathology and physiotherapy. However, the service wasn’t regular and Lisa didn’t feel it was enough to make progress, provide stability or build relationships between Ruby and Izaac and their therapists.

Receiving an NDIS plan for Ruby and Izaac enabled Lisa to make a choice about where her children received therapy services and how frequently they were seen, and to have therapists collaborating with one another.

“They both now regularly see a speech pathologist, occupational therapist and physiotherapist at CPA. It’s made a massive change to both kids. They have routine, they know where they’re at, and all their therapists work together,” said Lisa.

“Ruby’s about to transition to school, so her therapists have been going to preschool and getting Ruby to work with her peers and assist with the public school integration. Ruby’s come a long way in 12-18 months with her speech,” said Lisa.

“Everyone’s amazing at CPA, Maxine, their speech pathologist is outstanding with their language and communication skills. She’s part of their world now. They know her and she gets them,” said Lisa.

Easy to get started
Getting into service was fast and easy for Lisa. She was allocated a dedicated client service consultant who was empathetic and responded quickly to her needs.

“Once we got the NDIS funding it was a flow-on effect. It was a matter of weeks between contacting CPA and starting therapy, really not a long waiting period at all,” said Lisa.

Supportive and family centred
Through a family-centred approach, Lisa is a central voice in Ruby and Izaac’s therapy and is supported to continue the learning at home.

“I can’t fault CPA, we’ve made so much progress, especially with Ruby. They make sure I’m involved. I understand what’s required of me so I can confidently continue the work at home,” said Lisa.

A collaborative approach
Having a team of therapists around Ruby and Izaac who share information means they can work towards achieving each goal together and not in isolation.

“There’s a constant flow of communication via email and face-to-face with all the therapists. I know they’re all talking and swapping notes on what they’ve observed and worked on with the kids. I’m glad I’ve got people there who can see the changes and improvements. I love hearing the therapists’ feedback,” said Lisa.

Flexibility
Lisa commented that CPA was very flexible in terms of the location of where the sessions are held, which is convenient and allows them to see how the children respond to different environments.

“They can see the kids at home, preschool or a CPA centre, which is really important, as they see the full picture of how Ruby communicates with teachers and friends.”

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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