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Jessie loves life and is on a mission to be the best she can be, dreaming of joining the police force.

Jessie's dad, Paul, said his 13-year-old daughter, who has Down syndrome, is certainly a stickler when it comes to anyone in the family breaking the rules.

"I regularly get a stern warning when having a glass of wine of the dangers of drink-driving and ending up on the TV show, RBT," he said with a laugh.

"Jessie has come a long way since joining the NDIS four years ago and I credit the continuity of supports she now receives in her NDIS plan, in particular the fortnightly speech therapy she attends."

Paul admits he never realised the extent of what regular speech therapy could offer.

"When Jessie started speech therapy, I thought it would be purely about how she pronounced words and the physical control needed to just get the words out. I soon realised Saskia, Jessie's speech therapist, was teaching her a whole lot more, including questioning phrases and broader social skills.

"For example, Saskia has been working with Jessie to phrase up questions including how, what, why and when. The importance of being able to ask questions and be inquisitive had never dawned on me previously. It's certainly opened up a Pandora's box for Jess, with the ability to ask questions, be inquisitive and to gain the knowledge she needs to be the best she can be in life.

"More recently Jessie has been learning how to enter a conversation, observing the social, verbal and body cues, before politely interjecting with the words 'excuse me', rather than just barging in and interrupting!

"Interestingly, Jessie has noticed, herself, how people are more inclined to turn towards her and invite her into the conversation or the group if she follows these cues," Paul said.

Jessie's mum, Christine said the speech therapy has been working really well.

"It's made a huge difference," she said. "Jessie has just progressed to senior school and these skills have really helped her when it has come to fitting in and making new friends. We just can't believe how smoothly the transition has gone!"

Christine said when Jessie was younger all she could say was 'Umpt'.

“We thought at one stage she might never talk at all, but now, with the early interventions the NDIS has put in place, her ability to talk to people; deal with various social settings; ask questions; be curious and find things out... it’s just been awesome,” she said.

“Who knows anything’s possible with the right supports,” Paul added. “Christine and I can’t wait to see her in Police uniform, following her dreams.

“She’s certainly getting the skills now to have a much better chance of achieving her dream job,” he said.

[Transcript for 'Jessie, a force to be reckoned with.docx'](#)

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