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Geelong dad, Lingan, said in this unpredictable COVID-19 environment, he is relieved his six-year-old son, Raymond has his NDIS funding to fall back on to ensure he can continue working towards developing his skills.

Raymond, who has autism, usually has his occupational and speech therapy sessions at school but while he is at home with his family during this pandemic, he is still able to access and continue these important supports online.

“Using this alternative online platform ensures Raymond can keep improving and moving forward to meet his goals,” he said.

“Kids still need to improve every day so if they stop learning, and do other things, I think they are not going to improve.”

Lingan said online therapy sessions have been an ideal fit for young Raymond.

“He’s been able to maintain what he has already learnt so he won’t fall back, and it’s a great alternative in this social distancing/self-isolating environment,” he said.

Raymond is having his OT and speech therapy sessions via Zoom and Microsoft Teams on his iPad and times are booked through his therapists to flexibly suit his family’s needs.

“Times are very flexible and the great thing is we can do it from home,” he said.

“We don’t have to dress up and hurry out, or drive then try and find a park. We just stay home and when it is time, you click the link and you’re ready to go.”

Lingan said the iPad works best for Raymond.

“He can walk around the house and show his therapists things,” he said.

“He even did a performance on the piano, playing his own rendition of Baby Shark, which he taught himself!

“Raymond has his own room, with his own desk and his own iPad, which we have set up for especially for his video therapy sessions.

“Raymond gets very excited to see another person on his iPad. I think the online sessions are much better and easier for him,” Lingan said.

Gateways Therapy and Inclusion Support Manager, Bernadette Walker said technology ensures participants can continue working on their goals with their therapists even when they can’t

physically be together.

“In this way Gateways, as a registered NDIS provider, can offer continuity of service, real-time support and familiar and friendly faces in these uncertain COVID-19 times,” she said.

Lingan says Raymond, who enjoys watching Larva, Numberblocks and craft videos, drawing the characters and learning piano, has embraced the new way of attending therapy sessions.

“It’s new technology and Raymond just loves it,” he said.

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