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Julie Penfold says her son, Adam 'was fortunate all these supports were available.'

The energetic 12-year-old, who has Down syndrome, transitioned to the NDIS in 2013, when it was first trialled in Victoria's Barwon West region.

Thankfully for Julie and husband Kevin it was a straightforward process and a great relief for their family.

Reflecting on Adam's first plan, Julie said it had a good range of supports included.

Flexibility was built into it so they could adapt it as Adam grew but catered to his immediate needs.

'We feel fortunate Adam was born in this pocket of time where all these supports were available to nurture him,' Julie said.

'At the start, Adam was non-verbal and he had low muscle tone.

'With help from the NDIS we were able to work with speech therapists to help him communicate and an occupational therapist (OT) to help strengthen his muscles.'

Julie said all the NDIS supports Adam has received, including the early intervention, the continuity of support and all the provisions he continues to receive now, and will into the future, are priceless.

'It has helped Adam to become a very social and active young man,' she said.

'His strengths are sport and social interaction.

'He has built great networks at school and in the sports he participates in – particularly soccer and tennis.

'It has really helped him to develop, grow and to become a valued member or our community.

'Working regularly with speech therapists and an OT has been so beneficial too, especially when Adam went through kinder.

'We were able to work on all his fine motor skills, which lead him to be able to pick up and hold things like pencils, paintbrushes, and learn how to use scissors,' she said.

'We also had to concentrate on getting Adam up on his feet.

'We wanted to make sure he was capable of climbing up and down things like stairs and play equipment to help build his low muscle tone.'

'He has gone from strength to strength.

'When I look back it is incredible how far he has come,' Julie said.

Both working and parenting 4 children, Julie said their family will always be grateful for Adam’s NDIS funding.

'For Adam, the NDIS came in at the right time.

'He has had support at all the right stages, and it is that continuity of support that has made all the difference,' she said.

'As a family, if we did not have Adam’s NDIS funding, we wouldn’t be able to afford the fortnightly therapies.

'We might engage supports for a pocket of time, but it would not be sustainable.

'We are forever grateful for the impact the NDIS has had and continues to have on enriching Adam’s life.

'As parents, it is comforting to know he has support for life, especially when we are no longer around.

'It means he can lead his own life and be who he wants to be.

'At the end of the day all we want is Adam to be happy, active, and comfortable in his community.

'We want him to have a good social life, become employed and enjoy independent living.

'We feel long-term the NDIS is supporting us to work towards these outcomes and we are hopeful it will help him live a happy and fulfilling life.'

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