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Melbourne mum Nicole Boothby says NDIS early intervention supports have helped her 6-year-old son Wyatt so much he's now ready and excited to be starting his first year of school.

Wyatt started Prep last week and Nicole says his first days of school couldn't have been better.

'He was a bit nervous, but very excited, and it gave us so much joy to see him ready for this step.' Nicole said.

At 2 and a half, Wyatt was diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech – a rare disorder affecting his brain's ability to plan and control speech movements.

It meant Wyatt couldn't learn to speak. Instead, he taught himself to gesture and make sounds to meet his communication needs.

Nicole says getting early access to crucial speech, occupational, psychological, and behavioural therapies helped Wyatt to excel.

Now she and husband Gareth are excited to see their little boy start school, speaking clearly without a hint of any delay, able to regulate his emotions, and enjoying being part of a solid friendship group.

'I don't know what we would have done without Wyatt's NDIS funding. It was so crucial,' Nicole said.

'We wouldn't have been able to access as many supports as we did. It's been incredibly beneficial for us as a family and for Wyatt because now he has caught up.'

Wyatt came into Nicole & Gareth's permanent care a few weeks before his 3rd birthday, Nicole and Gareth said Wyatt's start to life had been full of change and uncertainty, which impacted his development.

'Not long before Wyatt came to live with us his lovely foster carers had started speech therapy, but with all the COVID lockdowns it made it difficult to get any consistency, so Wyatt struggled,' Nicole said.

The family's social worker helped them to access the Scheme, and NDIS partner in the community Latrobe Community Health Service has been supporting them ever since.

‘Everyone has been wonderful and given Wyatt’s circumstances we were able to prioritise his speech therapy and get regular weekly sessions,’ Nicole said.

‘We knew developmentally Wyatt was behind, having experienced early childhood trauma, so we knew at some point he would need to access play therapy or counselling.

‘We also noticed Wyatt had social, emotional, fine, and some gross motor skill delays, so he needed occupational therapy (OT).

‘I can’t even explain how much all these therapies have helped. His OT and psychologist are great.

We continue to have sessions and they have helped us to implement so many wonderful strategies that have really helped Wyatt to understand, communicate and regulate his emotions and behaviour.

‘Wyatts supports were also able to visit his kinder – their observations and ideas of what we could put in place to support him in the kinder setting were brilliant.

‘We’ve had so much help and advice, and we were able to put lots of things in place that had a wonderful impact on his whole kinder experience.

Just having that wealth of knowledge to draw on was incredible for us.’

Nicole says Wyatt used to struggle socially at kinder, but with all the help from NDIS funded supports and his exceptional, supportive kinder teachers, he was well prepared for the next step in his education.

‘Wyatt has really come a long way and he was so ready and excited to start school,’ she said.

‘He used to be the kid other kids would avoid at kinder, but now he has an amazing group of friends who are starting their school journey together.

He’s going to their birthday parties, and they are going to his.

‘There’s nothing more heartwarming than to see Wyatt making those connections with other kids and going off to school excited.

‘Now they get to see the beautiful Wyatt we get to see.’

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