

Autism Project

Cooper's Story

Living with Autism

Two years ago, Cooper hardly spoke at all and his communication barriers teamed with sensory issues made it difficult for him to concentrate and resulted in challenging behaviours. Consequently, he had trouble participating in activities enjoyed by other children his age, which was hard for his parents, Jodi and Adam, to watch.

Cooper has improved so much that in 2012, he'll be attending a mainstream school. And it's all thanks to early intervention.

Choosing the right intervention for a child with autism can be challenging, but Cooper Freeland and his parents Jodi and Adam found a great balance, starting with Sylvanvale playgroup and then attending speech and occupational therapy sessions at Sylvanvale Foundation.

Through playgroup and therapy, as well as lots of practice at home with his parents, Cooper developed plenty of new skills. He can now converse in sentences, answer questions and tell some stories. He knows the alphabet, can write his name, and is more in control and aware of his sensory preferences. He uses his imagination in play and is willing to try and participate in new activities everyday.

“The most rewarding part of Cooper’s journey is realising there’s so much hope in his future,” says Jodi. That’s the difference that early intervention makes.

Lions are seeking to increase government funding and support for early intervention intensive ASD –specific education and therapies for preschool children with ASD

Lions are also being asked to write letters to all levels of government across Australia to secure more funding for intensive ASD -specific therapies. Proforma letters are available on the Lugarno Lions website or through the hyperlink <http://www.lugarnolions.org.au/pre-school-autism/letter-proformas.html> .