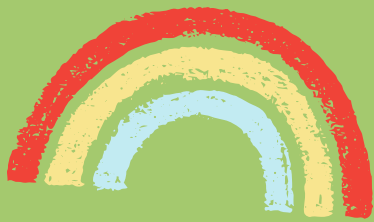


STORY OF JAYDEN TOH & ISABELLE LUN



Jayden and his mummy, Isabelle

Written by Senior Early Interventionist, May Soon

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

Having had her older child also go through developmental delays, Jayden's mother – Isabelle, knew the importance of identifying and supporting Jayden's needs early. Jayden's elder sister, Jocelyn, first enrolled into AWWA Early Intervention Centre when she was about 2.5 years old, to attain support for her speech delay issues. After showing significant progress, Jocelyn was discharged from the AWWA Early Intervention programme at the age of four, and was enrolled into a mainstream primary school near their home.

Jayden on the other hand, was diagnosed with ASD by specialists at the KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH), and soon after started intervention with AWWA when he was around two years old. Isabelle was very grateful that her family was very supportive of her decision to bring both her children to KKH for a diagnosis, enabling them to receive intervention at a young age.

UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING THE DIAGNOSIS

Isabelle could still remember the day she received Jayden's confirmation of his ASD diagnosis. She locked herself in her bedroom and cried her eyes out. She was grieving. After calming down, she told herself that she had to be brave and face the fact, and that she needed to find out how she could help Jayden.

Being his main caregiver, she could understand Jayden very well and felt that she could attend to his needs more holistically. After discussions with her husband, she made the decision to resign from her full-time job to attend sessions at AWWA with Jayden. This decision significantly impacted the family's finances, but she felt that they could still pull through by being mindful of their expenditures. She told her family that they had to be open to different possibilities, and sought help from professionals to support Jayden. At that time, her main priority was to focus on helping Jayden progress in his developmental milestones as much as possible.

Meet Jayden

Jayden is a boy who enjoys playing games such as Super Mario, and his favourite subjects are English and Mathematics.

He aspires to be a policeman and wants to care for his mother, his future wife and his children. Jayden is also diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT

When Isabelle approached her employer to inform them of her decision to resign, she was very grateful that her employer chose to continue to support her by offering her part-time employment. She went to work in the mornings, and attended early intervention sessions with Jayden in the afternoons. Jayden continued to progress, and transitioned to the Developmental Support Plus programme when he turned five years old. As Isabelle no longer needed to attend the intervention sessions at the early intervention centre, Isabelle made the decision to revert to full time work once more.

EARLIER PRESCHOOL YEARS

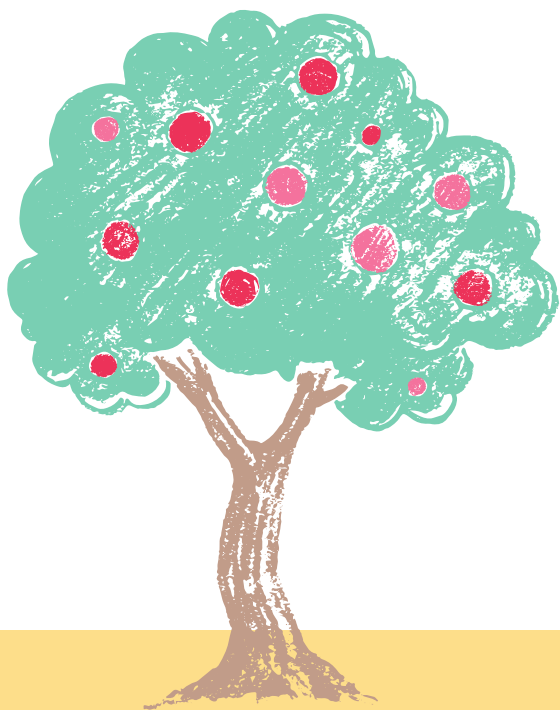
In his earlier years in preschool, Jayden was often seen as disruptive in his class. He would walk around during lesson time, or play with toys in a corner on his own. He was often by himself, struggled to follow instructions and could not engage in the activities like the rest of his peers. During a parent-teacher conference (PTC) with his preschool teacher, his teachers shared these concerns with Isabelle.

LITTLE GESTURES THAT MATTERS - A WHOLE NEW WORLD FOR JAYDEN

Jayden's experience with a new preschool was encouraging. What made the difference? It was the little gestures that enabled Jayden to flourish, and Isabelle to feel included.

The teachers were very welcoming and warm. Isabelle recalls that his new teacher would get down to his level to greet Jayden when he arrived every morning. After sharing with teachers and principal about Jayden's learning needs, his teacher informed his peers that they had a new friend with different needs and encouraged them to stay with him whenever he was seen alone. Since then, his peers treated him with care, holding on to his hand and pulling him back whenever he wandered off somewhere.

Since enrolling in his new preschool, Jayden felt more included, was happier and participated actively in class activities, learning new skills and making new friends. He learnt to share and play with children his age. Isabelle felt thankful to the teachers and the Development Support Plus team who helped Jayden. She was glad that she had made the decision to change schools and advocated for her son. Jayden progressed well and moved onto Pathlight School when he graduated from preschool.



Isabelle's advice for other parents

- Have courage
- Advocate for your child and yourself
- Ask for help
- Be proactive in finding resources to help your children

A note from



For individuals seeking resources on caregiving, you may refer to the [Enabling Guide](#) by SGENable.