Autism Spectrum Disorders Interviews

File Name: Nicole \_parent MP4

Duration: 02.59

**Video Transcript**

Video: Nicole talking to interviewer

Graphic on screen:

**Nicole, Parent**

Audio:

Start: 00.01

What did you think when your child started school this year?

How I felt about my child starting school this year, he was heading into Grade 3, it was a high level of anxiety for me as his parent because he was heading into a new grade level. I knew higher things would be expected of him this year. He was also heading into a brand new building at our school, a brand new classroom, a teacher we had not experienced before and of course another bunch of new kids to get to know. So there was a high level of anxiety for me as a parent.

But knowing the school, we’ve been here three years now, knowing the teachers prior, that he’s had prior, are excellent, their knowledge is sound, they are very educated on all things to do with autism. I know we had the resources so once I got over the hurdle of the new everything and classroom I knew he would be looked after.

What is the most pleasing aspect of interacting with your child’s school?

The most pleasing aspect of interacting with my child’s school is knowing that I’m heard. As a parent when you have a child with special needs, just knowing you are heard and it’s taken on board is such a big plus.

Knowing that your thoughts and feelings about everything matter and that they’re listened to is such a huge thing and I find with my son’s school, they really do take the time to listen.

What does the school do to involve you?

Things that my school did to involve me in his education; we have a regular contact through with our Student Support Group meetings. They happen once a term. Through these meetings you get to sit down with his teacher, the aide in the room and any other specialist that you might be seeing at the time, you put together a plan. You all work towards short term and long term goals that are revisited each term. So you have an ongoing plan of attack so to speak.

We also have a daily interaction with the teachers whether that be a quick chat before or after class, whether that be a quick email or a quick note in the diary back and forth each day about how the child is going, so you have constant communication which is a huge thing.

Strategies that were most helpful

The strategies that help my child the most at school, particularly this year heading into a new grade level, was a very firm and consistent structure within the classroom so he knows exactly what’s going on each day. There’s a visual timetable that tells him what’s going to happen at every step of the way so his anxiety is not heightened because he knows what’s coming, he knows what’s happening. It’s a very structured classroom and within that structure of course there’s room for flexibility and change. He is learning to cope with that so much better because it is such a structured …., I’ve used that word a lot, but that helps immensely.

What do teachers need to know about autism?

The thing I’d like teachers to know about autism is that there are no two autistic kids are the same. They are all branded under this one big spectrum, but no two are the same. I believe they have immense capabilities and possibilities to do whatever they choose to in life, and if the teachers take that on board and not be scared by an autistic child because they have so much to give. Sometimes you go on a very long road to get to the outcome that you’re after, but if they’re given the chance they will succeed.

Finish: 02.59