Autism Spectrum Disorders Interviews

File Name: Sue \_parent MP4

Duration: 05.37

**Video Transcript**

Video: Sue talking to interviewer

Graphic on screen:

**Sue, Parent**

Audio:

Start: 00.01

Transcript

**Sue M, parent**

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

How did I think and how did I feel when my child started school? In his Prep year last year I was extremely anxious heading into it. My son had only recently been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome, so being aware of you know where he sort of was in his landscape in his life at that time, the things that were affecting him. Going in to school it was my first child as well.

So yeah, extremely anxious, wanting to get as much information from practitioners outside of school to pass that information on to teachers so they know exactly where my son was at, and they could take that information to then utilise to get an idea of where he was at the start of the year and work on those things. So they could start and go ahead as opposed to probably spending the first half the year working him out.

So there was that part of it, so there was also I guess a sense of grieving as well. I was still trying to understand what was happening in my life and what was happening in his life and the effects of that and the change that had occurred. But you know as we progressed through the year that anxiety sort of lessened and now heading into Grade 1 this year I was extremely confident in you know the teacher’s ability to be able handle him, and you know progress him and help him achieve his potential.

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

Probably the most important thing is that I’m actually as a parent that I’m listened to. A lot of times you know we might ramble on a bit about what’s happening with our children and it can be a lot of information for the teachers to take on, but from a parent’s perspective to be able to be listened to, to get that information out makes me feel less anxious. I also know that the information that is important to get across to the teachers to do their job and to assist my son then that information is being heard and that helps me a lot and it definitely helps him.

What does the school do to involve you?

The things the school did to involve me in my child’s education were that they involved me in regular SSG meetings that we have which incorporates the teacher, the teacher’s aide, the vice principal of the school who is involved in the welfare of the children and also any therapists that I’ve been using have been able to come in as well. So we have a great support network who are able to sit down together to collaborate to create a matrix to be put down and passed on you know to even to the next teacher going forward. So that was really good to be involved in that.

I have been to a few professional learning courses and I’ve been able to pass on some of the information from those courses which has been really well received by the teachers and I find that really encouraging to know that they’re keen to learn more continually and even the information that they learn, they involve me in that knowledge as well.

How do you communicate with your child’s teacher?

How did I communicate with my child’s teacher? During the prep year last year that communication obviously the opportunity was there before class and after class to discuss any concerns that were made, appointments could be made. It could be as simple as that. We have diaries now in Grade 1 where I can communicate if my child has had a rough trot the night before night or a meltdown or we’re not coping. I can quickly write that note in the diary. Or there’s the hand signals of not having a good day or you know something like that. I can quickly whip my head into the door so it’s not disruptive to the class, but it can actually help them if I can give them a heads up on that things aren’t travelling too well. Phone conversations, I can them ring during the morning and pass on that information as well.

And obviously through those SSG meetings which are fantastic and the feedback given from them are the main reasons for communication.

Strategies that were the most helpful?

Using puppets and role play has been wonderful for my son to understand emotional sort of interactions amongst his peer group at school, playground and activities and things like that that he struggled with in his Prep year.

What would you like teachers to know about ASD?

What would I like teachers to know about autism. It’s just a difference of ability I thinks there’s a lot of potential in these children and they might not be able to express that potential yet but it definitely is there in them. I think if the teachers are able to keep the communication going, use the parents as resources as well, I think that’s really important we play a really significant role in that support network and that feedback about how our children are travelling. It’s a difference of ability and they are capable of doing some wonderful things.

I think anxiety plays a massive part. They are very much governed by their levels of anxiety and if we can release a lot of that and then they are able to engage into a lot of the activities or learning things they’re doing at school.

At the school my son is involved in differences are accepted. He’s very transparent. You wouldn’t know he had his disability. He’s very widely accepted by the peer group and the school group and differences are accepted. I think that’s made a great difference.

Finish: 05.37