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|  | Parents’ Stories |
|  | Dr Avril V Brereton and Dr Kerry J Bull |

**Garry’s Story**

Jez – My feelings about Jez from the day he was diagnosed “autistic”. (Written by Garry)

The first day I was very emotional. I couldn’t even start the car to go to work. I stayed home that day.

I then thought I had gotten over that initial feeling but have found it coming back to me especially when I see a movie, TV shows or even hear or read stories about autistic adults. For some stupid reason I place Jez in their shoes and think that is how he could end up and that’s when the odd tear builds up in my eye. But partial denial, the old he’ll be OK, he’ll fight this and nobody will even know he’s autistic, creeps back into my mind. But unfortunately there will always be that doubt. I know if I talked about my feelings with anyone I would be a blubbering mess. Being a six-foot man, I don’t think you are meant to do this.

I find him both frustrating and amazing. Frustrating for both him and me, when he’s trying to tell me something, and not being able to understand what it is he is saying. It is frustrating for me because I can hear the frustration in his voice. But I find him amazing in what he can draw and remember, like the alphabet and counting to 20, spelling certain words and streetscapes he continually draws.

It is these amazing things that make me feel good inside and these are the things I tell people at work that he can do.

With the news a couple of weeks ago about him being in the 20% group of autistic children that are intellectually normal and has the capacity of learning was a great weight off my mind. But then I have this stupid feeling, is he an exceptional copier and all the things he did on the assessment day, did he do it with his own intellect or was it routine? But I know it was his intellect.

Like I’ve stated before there is always something there in the back of my mind. With anxiety I’ll always have that burning question. Who’ll look after him when I’m gone?

But I know he’ll be OK (I hope).

It’s been hard writing this (emotion wise) but I’ve surprised myself and done it. But this is how I feel from the first day until now.

How I feel later, who knows? We’ll just have to see how Jez grows up.

For more information about the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Autism Friendly Learning website go to:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/autism](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/autism)