

# A fantastic year

## parent story

### Our life was already busy with two small boys in the family and another baby on the way

Our oldest child, Lincoln, has Down syndrome and wears hearing aids. We attended an early intervention program and spent a lot of time going to medical appointments and hospital.

At the suggestion of early intervention staff, we decided to send Lincoln to four-year-old kindergarten. We wanted to make the most of any opportunities that could provide stimulation and enrichment.

I rang and visited a number of kindergartens. What I remember most about the one we eventually chose was the kindergarten teacher's positive and reassuring tone when I spoke to her on the phone that very first time.

I had the feeling that she believed so much in what she was doing and that she enthusiastically welcomed all children. I felt that she really wanted Lincoln to attend her kindergarten.

We briefly discussed Lincoln's needs in our initial phone call and I was left with a very good impression that the teacher, Leanne, would look after him.

We followed up with a meeting to discuss Lincoln's needs in detail and I felt very reassured by Leanne's positive approach. There were no negatives, no uncomfortable moments and there was no hesitation. Leanne listened to everything I had to say and I felt very at ease with her ideas and her calm, confident attitude.

My initial instincts rang true as the year progressed. Lincoln was a bit anxious at first but Leanne was great at settling all the children.

He made friends, went to birthday parties and participated in all the activities with the other children, even though there were times when he wasn't all that keen.

One day Leanne rang me to discuss her concerns that Lincoln was stubbornly refusing to do any drawing, cutting or painting. Lincoln has always found fine motor activities difficult, but I was taken aback because he seemed to be progressing well in this area at early intervention.

With discussion and input from the staff who knew Lincoln from early intervention, we all agreed that Leanne should continue to gently push Lincoln along with these activities.

Leanne looked for ways to help Lincoln achieve these tasks or made them more manageable for him using some strategies that we all agreed on.

Leanne and the kindergarten assistants were all wonderful. They kept a watchful eye on Lincoln to make sure he participated in everything, as he is inclined to be passive and quiet and can easily be overlooked.

I never felt that Lincoln was being 'baby sat'. He was actively engaged in everything from singing and stories to climbing and games.



The end of year concert was a very special affair. Lincoln had completed a wonderful year at kinder and there he was dressed up with all the other children, ready to take his spot on the stage to sing and dance and entertain. Our beautiful little boy was going on to the big wide world of school the next year.

I still can't thank Leanne enough for that fantastic year. But somehow I think that she is the type of person who took it all in her stride, did not expect any fanfare, and probably feels that she did for Lincoln what any good kindergarten teacher would do for any child.

### Janice Chan

#### Association for Children with a Disability

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