



## Callen's Story



Early Childhood Intervention Australia  
Victorian Chapter

From the time our son Callen was 15 months old, it felt like our family was perpetually WAITING; WAITING and suspended in time, not able to progress and get on with our lives. We had to WAIT for professionals to take us seriously, WAIT to receive a diagnosis, WAIT for early intervention services and then WAIT again on WAITING lists to receive private therapies while we were WAITING for early intervention.

During this time our family was left to our own devices without any sense of real direction. This made us feel totally out of control, as we tried to deal with day to day life devoid of any information or support for our son. Meanwhile time moves on and you fret for all those opportunities missed as each day passes.

We finally received early intervention services when Callen was nearly four years old, which was over six months after he was diagnosed with Autism and two and half years from the time we first discovered he was behind in his development. These long periods of waiting in limbo were extremely stressful for the family!

To our dismay we found ourselves in a tangled web of service referrals, medical checkups and waitlists without receiving any useful services for our child which could have made a difference in Callen's life and that of the family's.

Ultimately we ended up feeling we were failing our son and lost all confidence as parents. These strong emotions were very hard to deal with and had a huge impact on the rest of the family and our circle of friends. Regrettably, because of being constantly overwhelmed on a day to day basis, we found we couldn't continue to maintain many of these relationships.

When I reflect on this time, perhaps what saddens us most is that we couldn't enjoy those early years with Callen. If we had received early intervention services EARLY, which is when they were needed, I strongly believe our experience as a family would have been far different; a lot of the stress and heartache might have been avoided and we could have enjoyed more of our time together.

Most importantly Callen would have had the opportunity to thrive and realise more of his potential had help been at hand.

