

# Family Perspective



## 1. Ruby's Journey

Ruby was born in April 2005 and it became clear in the first few months of her life that there was something not quite right. She was not thriving, had trouble feeding and suffered from low muscle tone, which made it difficult for her to lift or move her head. This was a very disturbing time as no-one could pinpoint exactly what the problem was.



Ruby's Mum said, "I was reluctant to approach Lifestart at first because we had no specific diagnosis for Ruby and I thought that may be a problem but I cannot put into words how comforted and relieved I felt when I first made contact with this wonderful group of people. The support and guidance and friendship that were extended to us were overwhelming. We were made to feel part of an extended family and were immediately put at ease. Since that time we have received ongoing one-on-one and group therapy which has been instrumental in Ruby's improvement."

See Ruby's full story in Member Stories

## 2. Mum "Got Out of the Way"

At 2 years old Sean had no speech and limited communication. His frustration was evident by the horrendous tantrums that included throwing chairs! Mum, Kerry, simply had to "get out of the way". She was distressed and stressed by the situation, tantrums occurred daily or more, and she had no way of knowing what Sean wanted because he couldn't communicate with anyone.

Two months later Sean was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, among other things, and Kerry was referred to Lifestart. Kerry says "Lifestart has given me the tools to alleviate the frustrations and tantrums by looking for the signs. We have also worked on his communication and now there is much less frustration."

Sean turned 4 in February. He is talking! He now has less frustration which means fewer tantrums. He is attending a mainstream kindergarten and looking at attending a mainstream school next year. Autism for Sean will always be there but now his mum has the tools to help him manage it. "Lifestart is really a lifeline," says Kerry who is now there to support other parents going through the same journey with their children.

**These are just two out of more than 300 reasons for holding this Kayak for Kids event.**