

Meet Lisa and Tania

A Communication Hub resource

(electronic bubbles pop)

(note swooshes)

(gentle upbeat music)

- Lisa is a pretty excellent young person. She's quite funny, quite stubborn - and she likes the movies and likes going out and seeing different things and doing different things.

- My name's Tania and I'm Lisa's mum. We live in Perth in WA and Lisa has cerebral palsy and doesn't use spoken language.

- Lisa's communication disability is quite significant. It's difficult for Lisa to communicate with people that don't know her well, and that's become more noticeable, I think, as she's gotten older.

(people chattering)

- You have to listen with your eyes and with a bit of heart chucked in there and really take notice of people. You can't just walk in and get to know Lisa straight away and what she wants and what she needs. That takes time.

[another speaker in the group] - For your mum, for the markets.

- [Tania] It's important for Lisa to be able to communicate and be understood because it means that it's her voice that gets heard. We need to make sure that Lisa does get a communication system that works.

- [another speaker] Maybe not.

- Lisa has a business with her sister, Lizzie, her younger sister, and they make clothing protectors, using sort of Aboriginal indigenous fabrics and sort of quite a unique design. So they started that together probably 18 months ago. In the business, her ability to be able to make choices around what sort of fabrics and what sort of designs work and all that kind of thing is really important, and I think will become more important as she gets more involved in it.

- If you don't have a good communication system that is easily recognised, then people make an assumption that you don't understand, and that can be difficult.

[people chattering] - This one looks very nice (cross-talking), I love that one.

- When we tried to open a bank account for Lisa and because she couldn't speak and 'cause she doesn't sign, like sign papers and that, they didn't sort of know what to do. Because of Lisa's communication stuff, it just couldn't happen for her because they didn't understand it.

[People chattering, some indistinct.] - ...stand out much. Lisa, what do you think of these ones, for the table?

- My advice for parents of maybe younger kids would be really do see communication and that as certainly equal to any of the other therapies that you might be sort of accessing it. And it's really important that they, when they go out into the world that other people can understand them, or else you're just putting them at a disadvantage and it's really hard. And, but I think, keep on looking for a system that works.

- We do use communication cards with Lisa and it's around things like activities and that she can pick, or that she likes to do. So we use those to give Lisa a bit of choice about what she wants to do during the day.

- My hope for Lisa's future is that we do find a communication system that works really well for her. That's sustainable even when she's tired or cranky that it'll still be something that's motivating for her to use, and for her to be able to really fully communicate not just what she wants, but also how she feels and how she feels about stuff that's happening in the world, and has that whole full range of communication that people without communication disabilities have.

(gentle music)