How All About Caring is supporting a 3-year-old child who has complex needs, Dominic, to experience the kind of life at home with his family that most take for granted.

"The goal was to bring him home and keep him home."
Amanda, mum of Dominic

A Case Study

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Happy, cuddly three-year-old Dominic spent the first year and a half of his life in hospital. Dominic is a highly complex and intensive medical needs child with an Omphalocele diagnosis, tracheotomy, nasogastric tube, and ventilator dependent.

Dominic's parents, Amanda and Kyle, had one goal, "Bring him home and keep him home".

"We couldn't have him live the rest of his life while he needs all this extra medical attention in a hospital. Like any other parent, you want to be able to bring your child home. Eighteen months in hospital for your first child is a long and gruelling process."

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The Challenge

Getting Dominic out of the hospital would require a considerable amount of support in both time and skill for the young family, "Someone needs to be within arm's reach and in line of sight 24/7", Amanda explains.

EnableNSW facilitated that first step from hospital to home. With a three-month-long rigorous review process, they selected the home health care service All About Caring to provide the overnight support needed for Dominic to come home.

"There was an extensive process a company had to go through to be able to acquire such an intensive care patient."

"All About Caring did everything that was required, including tracking down a Registered Nurse able to assist in providing the education and care requirements for Dominic. They also accommodated the extensive training required to get the Support Workers up to speed on Dominic's needs and requirements."

Then, once Dominic was home, Amanda and Kyle started considering the developmental and social support requirements for a growing toddler with complex needs and support that would help them participate in some of the everyday family activities that many others take for granted. For this additional daytime support, they again turned to All About Caring, accessed through the NDIS.

"We chose to stay with All About Caring because we loved our Support Workers so much. They're compliant with all of the training that Dominic needs and have accommodated his extensive requirements. He's not your typical job on the list; he's very intricate when it comes to his medical needs."

"The Support Workers that we have looking after Dom, honestly, are amazing."

All About Caring in action

Developmental needs

"It's a lot of extra work to get him to the same developmental milestones as an average child.

The day shift is when Dominic's therapies come into play. On a day-to-day basis, when we don't have emergency procedures happening, All About Caring is across the board if he has new therapies and new exercises that he needs to do, along with the typical developmental work.

We're trying to do all of your average toddler things like toilet training, and it's a lot easier when you've got an extra pair of hands because he's got tubing and extra medical limbs hanging off him. It's not as simple as sitting your child on the potty. We need to make sure that the tubings are out of the way and that his nasogastric tube isn't obstructed or potentially dislodged. Nothing is simple."

"All About Caring has done an excellent job of being adaptable to all the extra requirements and treating him like an average child that just has extra necessities."

Social interaction needs

“We signed him up for playgroup to get a little bit more of a social engagement, so we need Support Workers to sit in the backseat and ensure that he is safe while we transport him from point A to point B because Dominic cannot be transported without someone who is fully trained sitting next to him.

If we want to go to the shops or take him outside to play, the issue is he's connected to a five-and-a-half kilo ventilator 24/7, which needs to remain connected. So having someone even to carry that so we can go outside, enjoy the sunshine and play games means I'm not trying to juggle a ventilator and the suction equipment while ensuring his nose or gastric tube is safe and secure.

There have been more than a few occasions where Dom has actually taken out his tracheotomy. So that requires an emergency change because, essentially, he's lost his airway. So, having the extra pair of hands there for a procedure that requires two people is life-saving care.”

"We've never been able to just go catch up for a coffee with our friends and their kids. We can't just put him in the car and duck out. It's a lot of the stuff others potentially take for granted."

"Honestly, if I didn't have All About Caring, it would quite literally disable us further."

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What sets All About Caring apart

Connection

"The Support Workers have gotten to know Dominic so well. They know and understand all of his needs and requirements; honestly, some of them are like extended family at this point. They know him so well and are always keen to learn more about engaging with him. He gets excited when he sees them because he knows them so well."

Adaptability

“As toddlers grow, their needs change. And then, when you've got someone as complex as Dom, it's a lot of different therapies to try and help him with his developmental progress. He's got OT, physio, and speech therapy to name a few. Our therapy regime is ever-changing, so every day, there's always something new that is required to add to Dom's plan. The All About Caring Support Workers have done well to be adaptable to that.”

Understanding

“It's difficult when your child has a lot of extra needs; external people view him differently, and they'll treat him differently. It's good for Dominic's and our emotional and social wellbeing that the Support Workers treat him as average as possible. They are understanding of his differences and don't treat him as though he is severely disabled.

Sure, his organs are sitting outside of him. Yes, he's got a hole in his neck, he's connected to a ventilator, and he has a long tube coming from his stomach out his nose that you can always see. But at the end of the day, he's still your happy, average three-year-old who wants to play.”

Communication

“Anytime we need to discuss anything or raise anything further, it's easy to get a hold of people, and things are dealt with promptly.”

“I can contact my manager directly, and we'll quickly reach a resolution together. Danielle is the founder, and she's personally called me to make sure everything's on track and doing well. All About Caring is not just some huge conglomerate; it's person-centred.”

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Amanda and Kyle's advice to other parents of kids with complex medical needs:

"Find a company, like All About Caring, that doesn't treat you as a number. A company where they tailor everything to exactly what you require, understand ever-changing needs and work with you to achieve your goals. You want to make sure that you get good people, understanding people.

Adaptability is a huge thing, and respecting the boundaries as well. They're a genuinely caring company. The Support Workers feel like they're an extension of our family because they've been helping us for so long."

"All About Caring do everything they can to enhance Dominic's quality of life and achieve his goals. Which, as a parent, that's all you really want."

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