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It took Sky Grace 2 hours to land a barista job at McDonald's McCafé in her hometown.

The 24-year-old thought she was starting 2 weeks of work experience, but after proving herself in the fast-paced environment she was hired before her first shift had ended.

'I couldn't believe it. I was so happy. Then that week the manager called to give me my shifts for the next few weeks. I thought wow, okay,' Sky recalled with a smile.

Now a valued McCafé team member, Sky, who has Fragile X, an intellectual disability and autism, is employed part-time to do regular paid shifts.

Sky used the employment assistance funding included in her National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan to build her skills for work and to find a job.

Sky credits her success to the support she received from Jess, her employment consultant at local NDIS employment provider are-able.

'We've been working together for just over a year now and Jess has helped me so much,' Sky said. 'She's helped me to build my confidence and skills, and I wouldn't be where I am today without her,' Sky added.

Jess works with people with disability to overcome employment barriers and to identify suitable job options, so she worked with Sky to understand her interests, skills, strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes.

While Jess supported Sky to try different roles through work experience, Sky decided she preferred a job in hospitality, and she needed to develop her skills to become a barista.

Knowing Sky had some experience making coffees, Jess said they talked about what Sky could already do and the additional skills she needed to ensure she could get a paid job.

Somewhat shy, Sky also wanted to build her confidence to engage with customers.

To help build Sky's work and social skills to work as a barista, Jess set up a portable coffee cart customised to Sky's needs. It allowed Sky to learn all aspects of the job in a safe and controlled environment.

'Every Monday, Sky came in for a couple of hours to practise interacting with customers, taking orders, making coffees, taking money and working out the change,' Jess said.

A couple of months later when Jess was confident Sky had mastered her barista skills, she reached out to McDonald's to ask if Sky could do a 2-week work experience placement.

Much to their delight, the manager said yes. But it didn't take long for Sky to exceed expectations.

'After just 2 hours on her first shift, the manager turned to me and asked, "Can I keep her?" It was an incredible moment. I think we were both shocked, but Sky truly earned it.

'McDonald's has been fantastic,' Jess added. 'The staff are incredibly supportive.

'Sky is now thriving in a job she loves and she's grateful for the opportunity to be part of a supportive team who are helping her to grow.'

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