



Talking Matters

Newsletter April 2010

www.talkingmatters.com.au

The wedding edition

On Saturday 10th April Joanna married Ryan at the Immanuel College Chapel. Joanna looked stunning in a strapless white gown decorated with crystals. She was accompanied by three bridesmaids in purple gowns, a flower girl and page boy. The reception was held afterwards at the Findon Function Centre. Ryan serenaded Joanna with a Ronan Keating song before everyone hit the dance floor. Joanna and Ryan will honeymoon in Thailand before Joanna returns to work in May.



Thanks to all the children who helped to decorate Joanna's office before she left.

Making practice fun!

To learn new skills children often have to practice things over and over. Whether it is speech practice, spelling words, times tables or sight words, making it fun means a willing child and less frustration for parents as well. Try these ideas:

- If you are practicing words or pictures cut them up and make them into cards and play games: lotto, snap, go fish, matching.
- Make a magnetic fishing game and stick your cards on to catch and practice.
- Spread them on the floor and throw bean bags or even a rolled up pair of socks on them then say them.
- Get crafty: use stickers, glue, stamps and colouring.
- Put them under skittles. Make skittles out of soft drink bottles with a little coloured water in them.
- Hide your cards and find them. Try it with the light off and find them with a torch.
- Line your cards up and hop a toy along them, helping the toy animal or doll to say the words.
- Line them up and drive a car along them saying them as you go.
- Go to the toy library and borrow a new game and keep it just for practice time.
- Make a puppet eat the cards. Turn a paper plate into a puppet with a big cut out smile for eating cards.
- Stick them on the fridge and say three each time you open it.
- Laminate the cards, spread them on the ground, blow bubbles and say the one where it pops. Try burying them in the sand pit and finding them.

What is autism spectrum disorder all about?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is talked about often in the media and many people either have a family member or know someone "on the spectrum". There are various words that are used to describe these children and adults. Autism, Asperger's syndrome, PDD-NOS and Rhett's syndrome are all considered part of the Autism Spectrum. The word "spectrum" means that there is a range of skills and behaviours which children and adults may show. A rainbow is also a spectrum and people with ASD come in all colours, shapes and sizes.



All people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder have difficulties with social and emotional skills, communication and restricted interests. These social difficulties can range from a child who shows no interest in others to a child who has difficulty making and keeping friendships or understanding, expressing and managing emotions. Communication difficulties can range from a child who has no meaningful speech to a university professor who can lecture in astrophysics but has difficulty making small talk at a party. Restricted interests can range from a child who spends hours flicking a piece of string to a child who can talk at great length and in detail about space travel or dinosaurs. While many people on the spectrum have an intellectual disability, many have normal intelligence and some are gifted. All people on the spectrum benefit from support to develop their social and communication skills and some also need help with literacy and learning. With such a range of skills levels, support needs to be carefully targeted to the individuals needs, skills, strengths, weakness and interests.

What help is available? The government has recently acknowledged the considerable needs of these children and their families as well as their potential to develop with the appropriate support. Early childhood is the best time to begin support though older children and adults can also benefit. The government provides funding for families of children diagnosed with ASD who are aged under seven years to access a range of services including speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology through the "helping children with autism package" funded by Fahcsia. Talking Matters has recently become a provider for these services and we provide individual speech, OT and psychology services as well as educational software. In the future we hope to also offer group programs including social skill training. Information about this program is available on our website www.talkingmatter.com.au.



Talking Matters: *Helping your children reach their potential*

Our next workshop:

Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
on Monday 10th May

*For details and bookings see our
website or call 82557137*

Programs available now:

Fahcsia funded therapy for children with autism and Asperger's

Speech assistant program

Succeeding with reading program

Individual assessment and therapy

Visits to some schools

See website for details

Speech pathologists

Speech assistants

Reading teacher

Occupational therapists

Psychologist

Assessment and therapy

Group programs

Training sessions

Resources

Talking Matters

PO Box 3027
53 Midway Rd
Elizabeth East

Phone: 82557137
Fax: 82190128
E-mail: office@talkingmatters.com.au

