



Talking Matters

Newsletter May 2010

www.talkingmatters.com.au

What's happening at Talking Matters?



This month at Talking Matters Joanna and new husband Ryan return from their honeymoon. We hope they had a great time and brought back a tan and some great memories from Thailand.

Keira and Louise recently celebrated their graduations, Keira with a Degree in Speech Pathology and Louise with a Masters Degree in Speech Pathology.

Keira has been doing some assessments at Bethany Christian School and providing support for staff to work with students with speech and language difficulties. Joanne has begun a similar service at St Johns

Lutheran School in Eudunda.

Next week Carla and Joanne will present a workshop on Autism and Asperger's syndrome. Joanna and Keira are planning the next workshop for later in the term on voice and voice care for teachers and students.

Tracey is settling into the office and will be joined by Lee-anne on Fridays.

Sue Watts will be returning to Talking Matters on Mondays in May after time off for surgery. We all hope she is feeling well.

Fun ideas for developing vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the number of words that a person understands and can use. Children with bigger vocabularies are more effective communicators and read and write more fluently and effectively. There are lots of fun ways that you can expand your child's vocabulary.

- Talk to your child about the things that they see and use the correct words.
- Link new words to things that your child already knows "look at the big spotty cat, it's called a leopard".
- Look at non fiction books with clear pictures and talk about them together. Choose topics that interest your child. Try the local library.
- Watch information shows on TV or DVD with your child and talk about them together.
- Make a scrap book with pages for different categories: food, animals, people, and descriptive words: big things, red things, round things etc.
- Play games with picture cards such as lotto or snap. Match or sort the pictures in different ways, by use, colour, shape, beginning sound.
- Make your own cards from junk mail, magazine pictures or clip art.
- Choose a topic and point out things that you see when you are out. For example how many different types of vegetables can you see at the supermarket? Buy one you have never tried before and take it home for your child to look at, touch and taste.
- Go into a shop you have never been in before, such as a foreign food store and see what they sell there.
- Name, sort and categorize things around the house. How many things in the kitchen are for cutting? What are they called and what do you use them for? How are they the same and different?
- Play games such as I spy. Try I spy something that is big/ round/ shiny/ purple/ used for.....



Speech Pathology and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Last newsletter we looked at the range of skills, abilities and difficulties of people on the autism spectrum and what services were available. This article looks in more detail at what benefits speech pathology can provide for children on the spectrum. It is often clear to people why children with "moderate difficulties", those in the middle of the spectrum have speech pathology support. Those children speak, but not as well as others their age and so have help with traditional types of speech pathology services to develop their comprehension, improve their ability to express themselves and sometimes also work on the clarity of their speech production. People are often less sure what can be offered for children at either end of the spectrum. What can be done for a child with no speech and what is needed for a child who speaks fluently and sometimes even in advance of their age?



Children with no speech can still learn to communicate. Part of learning to communicate is developing "pre-language skills": those skills which need to develop before spoken language, which include: eye contact, listening, imitating, turn-taking, pointing and gesturing. For some children developing these skills will lead to speech beginning to develop. Others may need to use "alternative communication" either to "kick start" speech or for the long term. Alternative communication may include the use of sign language or a picture system such as PECS. PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) involves the child learning to exchange a picture card for something they want such as food or a toy. It works well for many autistic children as they are very visual learners. Many also begin to understand that words can also be exchanged for things and they begin to request things verbally. For those who do not speak, PECS can allow them to make choices and request or refuse things and so breaks down frustration and develops communication and social interactions.

Children with ASD who speak fluently may not have difficulties with vocabulary or grammar but they often have difficulties using language in social ways including: using appropriate volume, turn-taking, making a conversation, asking questions appropriately, and understanding abstract language. They may read fluently by remembering whole words with their excellent memory but have difficulty sounding out or writing new words because of weaker phonics skills. They may have difficulty comprehending what they read and sharing what they know in a way that others can understand. Speech pathologists can help children right across the spectrum to be more effective communicators.



Helping your children reach their potential

Our next workshops:

Autism and Asperger's Mon 10th May

Limited places still available

Voice and Voice Care on Monday 7th June

*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

- Individualised assessment and therapy
- Range of programs to suit families budgets
- Specialised reading instruction
- Coordinated speech, psychology and OT services
- Educational software your child will want to use
- Fun activities to support home practice
- Continuity from toddlerhood through schooling
- Practical professional training sessions with useful resources

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