



Talking Matters

Newsletter May 2013

www.talkingmatters.com.au

Coordinated services for your child

Term two is off to a busy start at Talking Matters as new team members settle in and our new OT service begins. Gemma and Becky have settled into their new roles providing speech therapy in schools and in the office.



We also had a very interesting presentation about dyslexia from Bartek Rajkowski, the speech pathologist who developed the Reading Doctor software and who has just completed his PhD in dyslexia. There is more about Bartek's presentation below.



We are very excited that our new OT service has begun with the OT space brightened up and with lots of great new equipment. Lucie has been spending time with the team and meeting families. She begins assessments and therapy sessions in the first week of term. Having Lucie as part of our team means we can offer an integrated service where your child's therapists can work together and bookings and accounts are simplified as they are all managed by our admin staff.

Carla, Lucie and Jo attended the recent Autism Expo. It was great to catch up with some Talking Matters families and colleagues from other agencies as well as to meet lots of new families.

With all the new team members and new equipment we decided it was time to update some of the photos we use for our resources. We had lots of help from some wonderfully patient kids and parents who came to help out at our photo day, so look out for some new faces on our website, blog, brochures and activity sheets.



The team had a training day in the holidays with our psychologist Angela talking about supporting families of children with social/emotional and behavioural issues, as well as the various assessments she can provide such as IQ testing. Angela's service can be booked through the Talking Matters office.

If you haven't checked our website recently we are always adding new information and activities. The resources are useful for teachers and carers too so feel free to share them around. Like our Facebook, and follow us on twitter, pinterest and our blog so you don't miss anything new.



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Dyslexia and speech pathology

Bartek Rajkowski, developer of the Reading Doctor software came to speak with the team about his research into dyslexia for his recent PhD studies. One of the key points from his presentation was that speech pathologists are well suited to supporting kids with dyslexia. While people often think that dyslexia is related to visual skills such as mixing up the order of letters or writing them backwards because of visual problems, research shows this is not the case. Research shows that dyslexia is actually a language based difficulty. There are three key skills which are challenging for children with dyslexia. The most important is phonological awareness; the ability to hear, remember and manipulate sounds and sound patterns in words and relate these to letters and letter patterns. Other important skills are language skills, particularly vocabulary, and auditory processing skills. Speech pathologists are trained to assess and provide therapy in all these areas and so can help support children with dyslexia to develop better literacy skills.

If you are concerned about your child's literacy skills there is information on literacy on the Talking Matters website including how speech pathology can help, as well as information and activity sheets to download. If you would like an assessment call 82557137 or check our website for details. Therapy sessions to support children in developing these skills are available in our office and at a number of local schools. Call and find out how we can help your child.



What can occupational therapy do for my child?

OT's can help children develop skills in the following areas:

Fine motor skills; which require careful control of movements, such as cutting, drawing, writing, threading, building and doing puzzles.

Gross motor skills; such as sitting, walking, crawling, and climbing. Skills such as balance and maintaining a stable posture are important for focus and being able to do fine motor tasks.

Sensory processing; the way a child makes sense of messages from their senses of vision, hearing, smell, touch, taste and movement affects many other skills. Children need to focus on what is important and ignore what is not. Some children are under-sensitive and so may seek out more stimulation by constantly moving, touching, or mouthing things. Others are over-sensitive and find it hard to ignore unimportant sensations of sound, movement, touch or visual information that others block out and so may be distracted and irritable or they may try to avoid situations when overstimulated.

Activities of daily living; includes eating, settling to sleep, toileting, dressing and grooming.

School readiness skills; such as attention, concentration, posture control, pencil skills, memory and visual perception.

Play skills; including imitation, social play, imaginative play and pretend play.

An occupational therapist will:

- **gather information** from parents and other important people in your child's life such as teachers or carers,
- **assess your child's skills** through watching your child do specific tasks using specially designed tests,
- **analyse** your child's strengths and weakness and provide a summary report,
- **develop** a suitable intervention program and **help your child to develop target skills** through specially chosen activities in therapy sessions and through home and school programs
- **provide strategies** for parents, teachers and carers to support the child in their daily activities.

Call the Talking Matters office to book an OT assessment to support your child's skill development.



Helping your children reach their potential

Our range of books and resources is growing!

Have you checked the books available? Many are on display in our waiting room and office staff can provide a list of available titles.

Families on the FAHCSIA early intervention funding may be able to use their resource funding to purchase suitable books. See your therapist for details.



Have you checked our website lately?

Our website has information about all kinds of topics related to kids with special needs including:

- Information and activities to download
- Checklists to check your child's development
- Information about services and funding options
- Links to other useful sites
- Links to our Facebook, twitter, pinterest pages and blog

Talking Matters offers:

- Individualised assessment and therapy
- Range of programs to suit families budgets
- Individualised reading instruction
- Saturday morning sessions for busy families
- Autism diagnosis and therapy
- Fun activities to support home practice
- Continuity from toddlerhood through schooling
- Practical professional training sessions with useful resources

Talking Matters

Ph. 8255 7137

PO Box 3027
53 Midway Rd
Elizabeth East
Phone: 8255 7137
Fax: 8219 0128
E-mail: office@talkingmatters.com.au

