



Talking Matters



Newsletter **Christmas 2014**

www.talkingmatters.com.au



What's happening at Talking Matters?



It's been a busy time in the later half of this year and Christmas is approaching fast.

We are very excited about our first ever Christmas party for Talking Matters clients. We are planning all kinds of fun things including a bouncy castle, petting zoo, craft activities and of course Santa.

Our new outdoor area is getting good use with the warmer weather with children learning and practicing all kinds of new skills with the fun activities available.

We have had some fun dressing up and celebrating for "talk like a pirate day" and Halloween.

One lucky little person William was very excited that he won our Halloween basket.

We now we have a new Christmas colouring competition which can be printed from this newsletter.



Michelle has settled into her new role as a disability consultant and has been successful helping families with developing NDIA plans, toileting, behaviour and separation issues. We have run a workshop to help schools to support families with accessing NDIA funding for their children.

We ran two workshops for teachers on developing literacy and we have now started planning for next year with a PECS workshop for teachers, therapists and parents.

We are also planning a number of group programs for the school holidays. See below for details of these.

Christmas can be a challenging time for families. If you have a child who finds celebrations stressful we have included some tips to help make things smoother at the end of this newsletter.

We hope that everyone has a safe and happy Christmas.

Talking Matters team!



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School holiday group programs

We have a number of group programs planned for the January school holidays:

Transition to school groups.

These are designed to help children who are beginning school in 2015 and need help with following school routines and getting along in a group. The children will practice things such as sitting on the mat, following instructions, hanging up their bag, putting on their hat, going out to play and coming back, going to the toilet and washing their hands, all to be ready for independence at school.

Play skills for preschool children.

This group is for 3 and 4 year olds who need help to communicate and play with others. They will practice listening and sharing activities and information with others, taking turns, talking and playing together.

Social skills groups

There is one group for children between for 5 to 7 and over 7 year olds, based on the What's the Buzz? program to which focuses on developing social communication, emotional self regulation and friendship skills.

Handwriting groups

These are for children under 8 years who need help to develop quicker, neater writing. These small groups are run by an occupational therapist and aim to make learning better handwriting lots of fun!

All groups are run by Talking Matters team members and are available through NDIA funding for eligible children. The skills targeted in the group must relate to the child's NDIA goals and there must sufficient funds available. Self funded families are welcome and HCWA funding may also be suitable if available.

To find out if one of these groups would suit your child speak to your Talking Matters therapist, check the services/ programs tab on our website for details or pick up a brochure from the office.

If you would like to find out more or to register your interest contact the office on 82557137. Places are filling fast.



Tips for Christmas

Some kids find Christmas a challenge. Here are some tips to help:

Prepare your child in advance.

- make a calendar or visual schedule to show all the things that will happen leading up to Christmas day
- write a social story about preparing for Christmas and what will happen on the day

Tips for shopping.

- leave your child with someone else if you can
- shop well ahead before the crowds build up
- shop on-line or from catalogues
- shop in short bursts over a number of days or weeks

Tips for Santa

- Start with Santa from a distance, at a parade, from a distance at the shops, in pictures or on TV.
- Be guided by your child's reactions as to when, if ever it is time to move closer.
- Send a letter or email to Santa instead if needed.

Tips for decorations:

- use a calendar or schedule to show when decorations will be put up, how they look and when they come down
- write a social story about why we have decorations
- look at the decorations a few times before they are put up and talk about where they will go
- include your child in choosing, making, putting them up
- make decorating a gradual process
- think about your child sensory needs. Flashing lights, shiny tinsel and musical items can be overwhelming

On the day:

Tips for presents.

- pre-warn them what their present will be so they will not worry teach them what to say when they are given presents, including what to say if they do not like a present
- tell relatives of suitable things to buy for your child
- wrap your child's gift in cellophane so they can see what it is
- reduce the chances of your child being overwhelmed by too many gifts by giving them one at a time over a period
- suggest relatives give your child money or vouchers for later on



Tips for family and friends:

- let family know that your child is likely to be overwhelmed
- keep visits to other people's homes short if needed
- take some things which help your child feel calm such as a favourite toy, DVD or electronic game
- let people know if your child does not like hugs or kisses
- help your child to know of a place where they can withdraw
- take them somewhere quiet for a break if needed
- agree with your child a quite safe place at home where they can go if you have visitors and they are feeling overwhelmed
- dress your child for comfort rather than for "looking good"

Tips for food

- if your child is on a special diet it may be best to tell other people not to give food to your child
- if your child is a fussy eater take some food with you
- allow your child to have familiar foods that they will eat

Be realistic

Christmas may not be all smooth sailing. It may be about reducing some meltdowns and educating family and friends about the ones that you can't avoid.

Helping your children reach their potential

PECS workshop coming in January!

PECS is an effective way of developing functional communication for children with limited language skills, including children with autism and developmental delays.

Sophie Kerr from Pyramid Australia is presenting a two day basic PECS workshop at Talking Matters in January. We have been able to open this up to others who are interested at a discounted price of \$500 (usually \$660).

To register or find out more contact us on office@talkingmatters.com.au or call 82557137.

Talking Matters offers:

- Speech pathology & occupational therapy
- Individualised assessment and therapy
- Saturday morning sessions for busy families
- Autism diagnosis and therapy
- Fun activities to support home practice
- School & home visits available
- Practical professional training sessions with useful resources
- A range of resources to support therapy

Want information and free resources ?

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 our blog

Talking Matters

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MERRY CHRISTMAS



Decorate the reindeer and return to Talking Matters by 5pm on Wednesday 10th December to go in the draw for the Talking Matters Christmas Colour-In prize! There will be two prizes, one each for boys and girls. Open to clients of Talking Matters only. The winning entrants will be selected at random on Thursday 11th December and notified immediately to arrange prize collection. No correspondence will be entered into.



Talking Matters

RETURN THIS SLIP ALONG WITH YOUR ENTRY TO GO IN THE DRAW

Childs Name:

Parents Name:

Phone Number:

We would like to display the children's art for Christmas.
Please advise us if you don't provide your consent for us to do so.

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