

Speech Language Therapy awareness

This Friday (August 20) is New Zealand Speech Language Therapy Awareness Day 2010. Organised by the New Zealand Speech Language Therapy Association to raise awareness of what the profession does and to help people identify if someone may benefit from speech language therapy.

Speech language therapists work in hospitals, schools and pre-schools, rehabilitation centres, and in people's homes and communities. They work with adults and children who have difficulty with talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking.

Susan Helmore, a speech language therapist in Wanaka, sees adults who have difficulty communicating as a result of a stroke, brain injury or a neurological illness. Susan also works with children in Wanaka who have mild-moderate communication difficulties. It is best that children receive therapy as soon as a problem is identified, even as young as three.

One in five children have suspected speech or language difficulties. It is important that parents and people working closely with children know how to recognise if a child might have a problem and refer them for an assessment.