

New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (Inc.) Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa

Affiliated to the International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatrics

21 August 2009

Re: Speech-language Therapy Awareness Day 28th August 2009.

If you awoke this morning unable to speak or swallow, who would support you?

Speech-language Therapy Awareness Day 2009 "Time to talk" aims to highlight the important work of speech-language therapists across New Zealand. Over 1,000 speech-language therapists work in New Zealand providing services across a range of demographic groups. Specific examples of our roles include:

- Assisting newborns to develop feeding skills;
- Supporting young children with their communication and literacy development;
- Helping children, adolescents and adults overcome stuttering;
- Working with victims of road accidents to recover speech and/or language skills;
- Supporting communication and swallowing rehabilitation for adults who experience strokes or degenerative neurological disease.

Communication is fundamental to being human and essential to our quality of life. Therefore every New Zealander deserves the right to be supported in developing or regaining communication skills. Here are some important points about communication and speech-language therapy:

- Communication development underpins children's emotional, social and academic development.
- Early intervention is essential to achieving positive long term outcomes for children who experience communication difficulties.
- The involvement of families and whānau is critical to developing communication skills for children and adults.
- As a nation, we need to improve our understanding of people who have difficulty communicating and we must work towards the provision of the best possible services for these people.

Speech-language therapists currently receive professional development and support through the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA). On behalf of the NZSTA, thank you for taking the time to become aware of the speech-language therapy profession. Our Association looks forward to developing New Zealanders' understanding of speech-language therapy and building links within our local communities and across education and health agencies throughout the country.

All the best for 2009 and beyond - we wish you every success.

Yours sincerely



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