



Therapy Professionals Ltd

Newsletter

Spring 2017

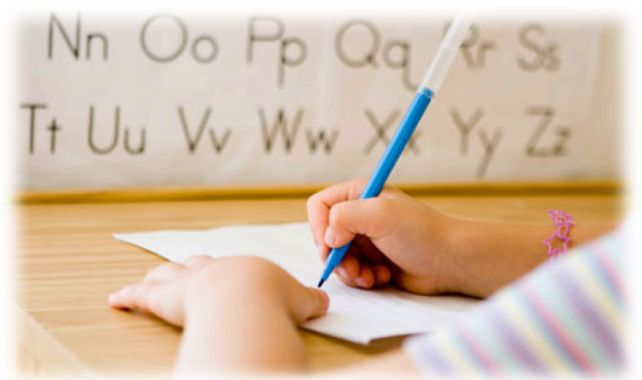
Handwriting is still an important skill

Handwriting is a complex process involving thinking, memory, fine motor or hand control, a sense of touch, and eye to hand co-ordination.

Today with technology we increasingly type in place of handwriting. Although typing and technology are very useful tools, handwriting has many benefits over typing. According to research, three areas of the brain light up in a highly co-ordinated way when a person is handwriting and no such activity is observed with typing.

Handwriting helps us with:

- reading and writing
- reading comprehension
- memory and recall
- critical thinking and conceptual development
- creativity
- calming the body and nerve ends
- managing depression and anxiety
- problem solving
- organising and processing information
- focussing on tasks



Children who struggle to write by hand often avoid it or are encouraged to type instead. Unfortunately they then miss out on all the benefits derived from handwriting and from gaining the help for the underlining cause of their difficulty, which may include problems with:

- fine motor weakness or weak hands
- poor co-ordination between hands
- poor core muscle strength or control of posture
- poor eye-hand co-ordination
- poor processing of information from our senses

These functions are necessary for many other life skills and activities eg using a knife and fork, dressing and grooming.

Occupational Therapists are experts in improving handwriting and hand skills. If you know a child who is struggling with their handwriting contact us and our friendly Occupational Therapist can help.

<https://tedxinnovations.ted.com/2016/05/03/3-tedx-talks-on-the-benefits-of-handwriting/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?mcubz=0>

Speech Language Therapy

A Speech Language Therapist helps with managing or improving communication and swallowing problems. They specialise in both, as many of the same muscles, nerves and body parts are used for speech and eating and drinking.



If communication is a problem, contact us. We may be able to help when any of the following are a problem:

Non- Verbal communication

- facial expression
- gesture/sign language
- body language
- symbols (writing, drawing, pictures)
- technology – using email, texting, alternative communication devices

Social Rules:

- considering other people's points of view
- recognising non verbal clues
- taking turns, eye contact, personal space
- staying on topic, having conversations
- adapting communication for different situations or audiences

Verbal communication:

Speech

- making sounds like 'k' and 's' clearly
- talking without hesitation or repetition
- talking with a strong voice
- making the voice lively and interesting
- hoarse or husky voice

Language

- making sense of what people say
- knowing and choosing the right words to explain your meaning
- joining words together in sentences, stories and conversations

If you have a problem eating and drinking you may be experiencing some of these symptoms:

- coughing while eating or drinking
- choking while eating and drinking
- repeated chest infections
- taking longer to eat or drink
- reduced appetite
- unintentional weight loss
- avoiding eating/drinking in public
- food sticking in your throat
- dribbling
- food/fluid coming out of the nose
- spilling food from mouth while eating
- wet or gurgly voice after eating or drinking
- dehydration



If you know someone who is struggling with eating and drinking contact us. All our Speech Language Therapists are members of the New Zealand Speech Therapy Association giving you the assurance they have the required education, knowledge and skills, keep up to date with the latest trends and research and adhere to a code of ethics.

Phone: (03) 377 5280
Email: therapyprofessionals@clear.net.nz
Website: www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz

Staff Profile – Rae Taylor, Speech Language Therapist

Rae has been working as a Speech Language Therapist since 1995. She has a Bachelor of Speech Language Therapy from Canterbury.

She has worked in a variety of settings in New Zealand and overseas, working for the NHS in London for eight years, specialising in developing Speech Therapy services for children under five years.

Rae did voluntary work in Ghana, West Africa where she worked extensively supporting children with autism. She has worked with high school aged children with disabilities in Sydney. She returned from her overseas adventures in December 2010 and has worked for Therapy Professionals Ltd since January 2013.



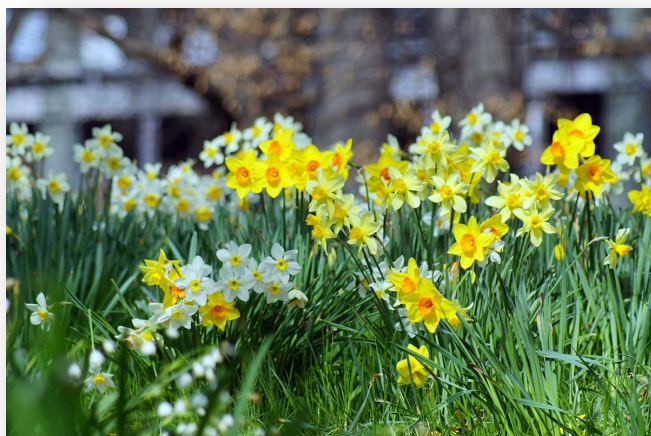
In this role she works with people with intellectual and physical disabilities and young students with learning disabilities. She works with people who have difficulties with eating and drinking and communication. Rae is passionate about giving people a means of getting their message across, whether it is through using Makaton signs, pictures, photos or their voice.

Keep Fit with Gardening

It's spring and with all the rain we've had, the growth has been tremendous. We're all itching to get out there and tame the growth. Gardening is a great activity, it's good for the soul and helps keep us fit. It works and stretches our muscles, however it can be **hard** on other parts of the body, especially our back and knees.

Our friendly physios and occupational therapists have some helpful tips on keeping fit while gardening. You'll find this on our website. Just follow this link and enjoy your gardening this spring.

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/keep_fit_with_gardening.pdf



What is Play Therapy?

Play is the natural way children learn. Play therapy can act as a form of counselling to communicate, help prevent or resolve any psychological and psychosocial challenges – separation of parents, trauma, loss of a loved one, chronic illness, etc. Play therapy, allows a child to express their experiences and feelings through a natural process which allows them to be healthier, have better social integration, grow and develop.

Play is a fundamental part of child development and sometimes revisiting play with a child can develop and/or strengthen communication and relationship abilities.

Research has shown that early intervention using play can make improvements in core deficits in a child's development

Introducing Sara Gibson – Early Intervention Teacher and Play Therapist

Sara started her career as a Kindergarten Teacher then she branched out into teaching children with specific learning disabilities and children who are speakers other languages. From there she moved to work as Play specialist and then train as an Early Intervention Teacher, which are the areas her main interest lies. She has worked with children with a variety of challenges from ASD to more complex physical, cognitive and developmental needs.

For the past two years Sara has branched out to develop her computer and administration skills and has worked doing office administration and now feels it is the time to return to her area of passion.

Events

Don't miss **The Cantabrainers Choir Concert**
10 am Wednesday 13 December

For more information on the Choir follow this link:

<http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/cantabrainers-choir.html>

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