



*“The best thing about my career is getting paid to make a difference in a child’s life.”
– Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)*

Four year old Kyle has achieved some pretty important milestones recently.

Last year he learned to walk. This year he’s learned to eat independently and use and understand basic language.

Kyle was born with a genetic disorder of bone development. It means his speech and language development is delayed.

After two years of working with a Ministry of Education speech-language therapist (and other specialists), his mum, dad and two older sisters are delighted with his progress and he is too.

They’re optimistic he’ll make a good transition to school and say there’s plenty this happy youngster will achieve at school with the right team approach and support.

Nature of Work

Speech-language therapists, working closely with parents, teachers and other specialists, help children and young people with the development of speech (the sounds they make and how they produce them) and the expression and understanding of spoken language (the content of what they say and the way they say it).

Speech-language therapists observe and assess children and young people who are referred to the Ministry of Education by teachers, parents or health specialists for speech and language needs. They talk to adults in a child or young person’s life and observe a child or young person’s overall development and behaviour to find out what that child or young person’s needs are.

The process can occur at a child or young person’s home or in an early childhood education or school setting, wherever is most appropriate.

As a speech-language therapist, you'll adapt the way you work to suit the individual needs of a child or young person and tailor your approaches to suit the context in which they live and learn.

"We're encouraging Rueben to develop his speech and language in everyday, real life situations. As he climbs the stairs to the front door, mum practices the 'SSSS' sound with him. When they get to the top they finish the word together – 'STAIRS!'" – Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)

Speech-language therapists work with other specialists and agencies for extra support with behaviour, vision, hearing and other special education needs. As a result, they develop close working relationships with a range of education, health and community professionals.

Preparing programmes and providing them to a child or young person's support team for feedback and ideas are central to a speech-language therapist's role. Programmes become part of a child or young person's individual education plan (a plan can be made up of several programmes each tailored to meet an individual's different needs). Over time, programme strategies are implemented, monitored, reviewed and adapted by a child or young person's support team.

"My ultimate goal is to help a child use speech and language to form friendships, express their needs, wants and ideas and demonstrate new learning. It's about making sure communication is not limiting their ability to learn and engage successfully." – Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)

Speech-language therapists also have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience by developing programmes and providing training to early childhood education services, schools and community groups.

Who are we?

The Ministry of Education is a significant employer of speech-language therapists and we're looking for more. The Ministry has offices throughout New Zealand where we aim to provide access to education and learning to all New Zealand's children or young people.

Working for us, you'll help people see that children and young people with special education needs are more than their disability and, with the right support, can participate, learn, achieve and contribute.

"It's pretty hard not to feel passionate about this job when you see a child struggling and know you have the knowledge and skills to pull together a team who, together, can help them reach their potential and change their lives." – Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)



Feel like a change? Now is a good time to think about speech-language therapy career opportunities with the Ministry of Education.

Still at school or studying at university? In a related career but feel like a change? Regardless of your situation, now is a good time to think about a career in speech-language therapy with the Ministry of Education.

Speech-language therapy is not just a job – it's a profession with possibilities. Why not join us?

Where can I go in my career?

Becoming a speech-language therapist with the Ministry of Education will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

"It's great to work with like-minded people. I've yet to meet anyone here who hasn't got the desire to move things forward and make a difference in a child or young person's life." – Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)

Speech-language therapy is also on Immigration New Zealand's long-term skills shortage list.

Being supported and supervised by experienced professionals within the Ministry. Keeping up to date with the latest evidence, taking part in ongoing training and mixing with a wide range of highly skilled and talented professionals will keep you challenged and stimulated.

A lot of people think it's an office job. But it's not. You're in and out of the office, on the road, in schools, kindergartens, people's homes and hospitals – you're all over the place depending on your day." – Te Mania Kottaiya (Speech-language Therapist, Waikato)

Meet Te Mania Kottaiya, a *Speech-Language Therapist* in Hamilton



9AM TUESDAY MORNING: Te Mania promotes language learning through play.

“For me the rewards are using your knowledge and skills to make a difference in people’s lives, at the end of the day, that’s what we’re all here to do.”

HER BACKGROUND: Te Mania Kottaiya is a full-time Speech-Language Therapist with the Ministry of Education.

Originally from Whangarei, Te Mania affiliates to the northern tribes of Te Rawara and Nga Puhī. The busy mum of two is one of the Ministry’s first ever speech-language therapy scholarship recipients.

She’s worked for the Ministry of Education as a Communication Support Worker and a Speech-Language Therapist. She’s also worked with children and young people as a Speech-Language Therapist in a special school.

HER STORY: Making a difference to the lives of young Māori children was a big part of Te Mania’s desire to become a Speech-Language Therapist.

That and an auspicious visit to a career advisor who noted her likes, dislikes and bursary subjects (Māori, English, biology and geography) and suggested a career in Speech-Language Therapy.

At 19, Te Mania packed her bags and headed to Hamilton (for her first year of study) and then to Christchurch where she picked up a three-year scholarship from the Ministry of Education to complete her studies.

Today, she works with approximately 45 children – each with a different set of speech-language needs and requiring different levels of support.

One of the things Te Mania enjoys most about her job is the variety of people she works with.

“I love the interesting and wonderful children and families I work with. It’s an awesome job if you love working with people.”

THE REWARDS AND CHALLENGES: “It’s a career that can take you a lot of places – into education and health, into special schools or private practice, overseas. There’s a lot of scope,” says Te Mania.

And you never stop learning, which is something that’s both exciting and challenging, she says.

It’s a challenge to bring what you’ve learned in your degree into the real world to find the best way to work with families and the many people who support a child.

“But it’s also rewarding to learn about the children and families you work with.”

Te Mania recently took part in a Hanen training course aimed at improving the way specialists work with parents of children with speech and language needs.

“For me the rewards are about using your knowledge and skills to make a difference in people’s lives. At the end of the day, that’s what we’re all here to do.”

HER FUTURE ASPIRATIONS: She looks forward to building on her degree and experience to date. Te Mania’s next big goal is to further her studies, maybe when her children are older.

Want to speak to someone about a Speech-Language Therapy career? Give us a call or drop us an email.

Moving into one of our fixed term, practice focused leadership roles will give you the chance to lead change and improve services from within the organisation.

Other career opportunities include management, getting involved in special projects and offering supervision.

What skills and knowledge do speech-language therapists have?

- ▶ knowledge of normal and delayed speech and language development
- ▶ skill in managing speech and language needs in a variety of settings
- ▶ knowledge of the human body and its physiology, neurology and anatomy
- ▶ understanding of how speech-language needs affect how children learn
- ▶ knowledge of psychology and education theory and child development
- ▶ knowledge of community and family support services
- ▶ excellent communication, teaching, research, planning and administration skills.

What qualifications and experience do I need?

You need a Bachelor's Degree in Speech-language Therapy or an equivalent that meets the requirements of the [New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association](#).

The [University of Canterbury](#) and [Massey University](#) both offer four year degrees that combine academic and clinical course work.

The [University of Auckland](#) and [Massey University](#) offer master's degrees in speech-language therapy aimed at speech-language therapy, psychology, education and linguistic degree graduates.

If you're studying you may be eligible for a [Ministry of Education scholarship](#) worth up to \$12,000.

If you're still at school useful subjects include maths, English, sciences and second languages.

Research and plan for your career by checking out the [Career Services](#) website.

What about my personal qualities?

You'll spend lots of time with people from a range of ages, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles. You'll need the ability to listen, build trust and inspire confidence.

Being understanding, patient, supportive, creative and practical are all great personal qualities for a speech-language therapist.

"We have to be open in our thinking and practice, knowing that no one therapist has all the answers." – Christian Wright (Speech-language Therapist, Wellington)

Having a strong interest in team work and collaborating with other professionals is important.

What salary can I expect?

Salaries for speech-language therapists vary between \$40,000 and \$74,000 per year, depending on skill, experience and the sector in which you work. The Ministry also offers reimbursement of some study-related financial costs.

What are the working conditions and benefits?

The Ministry of Education offers five weeks' annual leave and flexible working conditions, giving you the opportunity to balance work with child care, travel and training commitments.

Ready to go? Now's a great time to start a rewarding and dynamic career as a speech-language therapist.

Where can I find out more?

Speak to a speech-language therapist or contact the Ministry at:

- ▶ 0800 622 222
- ▶ special.education@minedu.govt.nz

Ministry of Education

- ▶ www.minedu.govt.nz/educationsectors/specialeducation.aspx
- ▶ www.minedu.govt.nz/sestudyawards

New Zealand Speech-Language Therapists' Association.

- ▶ www.speechtherapy.org.nz

Careers information

- ▶ www.careers.govt.nz