



TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Working in Learning Support

SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST





Meet Nicky-Marie Hitaua, a speech-language therapist in Gisborne

Nicky-Marie has worked as a speech-language therapist for the Ministry of Education since 2014.

Nicky-Marie's story

Nicky-Marie has always been passionate about language ever since she was a child. She studied English, Japanese and Te Reo Māori from High School up to Tertiary level. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts at Waikato University with a major in Linguistics then went on to complete her Master of Speech Language Therapy Practice at University of Auckland.

Nicky-Marie's day-to-day work

“Variety within structure would be how you describe a speech-language therapist’s work. Structures and service pathways keep a focus on providing our service in a safe, effective and ethical way. The variety comes from the kids, their whānau, their teachers, and collectively problem-solving to ensure they all flourish.

In my experience, I spend a lot of my time listening to whānau concerns, kaiako concerns, other-specialists’ concerns and collaborating in a way where all voices feel heard and valued and then teaming to provide a service for our tamariki.

The work is relational, analytical, restorative and mana enhancing for everyone. Persistence does pay off.”

Reflecting cultural values in her work

“I am my culture and my culture is me - my values are expressed in everything that I do. How I hold myself, how I interact, how I engage. It is very difficult for Māori to separate their Māoritanga from themselves when they step into their professional role, but rather it is an added value that they innately possess.”

Rewards of the role

“Being a speech-language therapist has been a way that I have been able to give back to my people and community. In a town like Gisborne, there is a high population of Māori with different backgrounds and there are very few speech-language therapists who are not only fluent in Te Reo me ona Tikanga but who can also converse with whānau in a way to make them feel safe to contribute.”





Nature of the work

The Ministry of Education is a major employer of speech-language therapists.

Speech-language therapists:

- » work to understand the impact of the child's speech and language difficulties in the context of their home, school and community
- » work closely with parents, whānau, caregivers, teachers and other specialists to help children and young people to develop their speech and language skills
- » work as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- » talk to the adults in a child's life to find out about a child or young person's overall development and behaviour so they can identify what their individual communication needs are.

“I am my culture and my culture is me - my values are expressed in everything that I do.”



Qualifications and experience

To become a speech-language therapist you need:

- » a Bachelor's (Hons) or Master's degree in speech-language therapy or an equivalent that meets the requirements of the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association
- » to be eligible to be a member of the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists Association.

Skills and knowledge

In addition to the right qualifications, a speech-language therapist must have knowledge of and skills in:

- » managing speech and language needs in a variety of settings
- » understanding how speech and language needs affect how children learn and participate in social contexts
- » working effectively with adults and facilitating their learning
- » maintaining meaningful relationships with whānau and teachers and providing support services
- » working with diverse cultures
- » acknowledging and respecting Te Ao Māori
- » communicating, teaching and planning effectively.



Career development

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.

You will:

- » be supported and supervised by experienced professional colleagues
- » be kept up to date with the latest evidence
- » take part in ongoing training
- » have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

In time this can lead to leadership roles, eg, manager, practice adviser or practice leader. You might also have opportunities to take part in projects, working groups or consultations.

Contact us

Want to speak to someone about a career as a speech-language therapist? Give us a call or drop us an email.



Further information about speech-language therapists

Learning Support careers and professional development

For more information about the role of the speech-language therapist and working in Learning Support, visit our learning support careers webpage www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education

Learning Support study awards and scholarships

If you're interested in a career in learning support you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out more at www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards

Career information

For profiles of different careers visit the Careers New Zealand website www.careers.govt.nz



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that delivers **equitable** and
excellent outcomes

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kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**

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