

## **The Johansson Program**

### **Specialist therapy for children with Down syndrome**

Small Talk Therapy provides specialized speech-language therapy for children with Down syndrome. The Johansson Program is our core focus. This Program was designed specifically to maximize communication development in children with Down syndrome. It is evidence-based, comprehensive and effective.

Therapy includes:

- parent-child interaction strategies
- mainstream interventions such as use of signing and visuals for communication development and success
- direct up-to-date therapy based on emerging research from Down Syndrome Education International
- It also addresses numeracy, fine motor, memory, auditory and visual perceptual and processing skills.

Research shows adults with Down syndrome typically use talking as their primary form of communication. The brain has critical periods of learning opportunity, particularly in the early years. Early intervention from six months of age is crucial for long-term communication success.

Families taking part in the Johansson Program often report their children become more confident communicators. Their children are more included. They are able to interact and participate. Parents become confident in ensuring this continues at preschool and school. Other children benefit from learning visual and signed communication and effective interaction skills. Educational expectations for children with Down syndrome improve. Many children participating in the program reach and surpass their perceived potential.

Intensive, one hour sessions are provided fortnightly. Parents commit to carrying out home practice activities with the child every day. School staff see the benefits of the Program and are usually keen to integrate strategies into the curriculum.

Information about the child's successes and communication targets are shared at IP and IEP team meetings to ensure there are opportunities for successful communication and continued progress in the home and school.

Training in the Johansson Program requires a 12 month commitment. It is not currently possible to offer the Program under the public system due to training costs, ongoing professional development requirements and extensive session and resource preparation time.

Please contact [www.smalltalktherapy.co.nz/down-syndrome](http://www.smalltalktherapy.co.nz/down-syndrome) for further information.

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**Specialist Speech & Language Therapist**