

Speakable

A magazine with news and articles
about communication and confidence

**Amazing mobile
apps for learning
stimulation**

*You can use those apps
for reading, writing,
articulation and Maths*

**6 tips to increase
your confidence
when communicating**

*Simple and very useful
attitudes to help you
communicate with
confidence*

**Useful tips for a
new school year**
*Start 2021 performing
well at school and
making a lot of friends*

The Speakable Team

#3 Issue | January 2021

Starting 2021 full of energy!

Hello achievers,

2021 just started and we are super excited to begin our operations at Speakable. Last year was a huge challenge for many businesses and people, but we all kept a strong-minded focus on providing services with excellence to our clients and continuously adapt to new procedures.

Speakable learned how to provide telehealth services and now is perfectly able to provide both in-person and remote sessions for the best outcomes of our clients. We appreciate your ongoing support and you can always count on us! Other innovations include our nonstop blogposts about speech pathology, learning difficulties, communication confidence and much more, as well as our new product, the Speakaboo Cards to develop phonics and speech abilities.

Our new issue is full of cutting-edge articles to inspire parents, students, teachers, speech pathologists and other health specialists.

We hope that you enjoy our third issue! Please feel free to share your reading experience and to give your feedback for us to be better and better!



Binh Doan

Managing Editor and Executive Director of Speakable

Speakable Team

Managing Editor Binh Doan

Designer Henrique Santos

Speakable Team of SLPs and Teachers Amos Tsang, Binh Doan, Hansol Kim, Haruko Nara, Henrique Santos, Tara Taylor

Speakable Supporting Team Rebecca Nguyen, Van Nguyen

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NEWS: Testimonial from Binh Doan on speaking



Once a shy kid. Was teased for speaking English with an accent. Hopeless at kicking a ball. But I found my passion: speaking! Keep working on your craft, believe in yourself and never ever let anyone put you down for being yourself. Thank you [Toastmasters](#) and for all who have supported me through this journey of public speaking in 2020. I love you! ♥♥

Accent Reduction Challenges and Opportunities



Living in a foreign country can offer a wide variety of experiences in anyone's life, from gastronomic novelties to the use of a new alphabet. At first, most people might feel lost with so many new social and cultural differences, especially when the countries are separated by oceans and thousands of kilometres. Australia is used to embrace new cultures and that's easy to confirm by simply observing people at an urban centre in Australia for five minutes to see such culturally diverse individuals. However, language barriers impact relationships on a daily basis.

There are some very important challenges that might arise simply because a person speaks English with a different accent:

- **Stereotypes:** If your accent can be easily identified, then your nationality will draw many stereotypes, mostly the negative ones. People will expect bad habits, political views and other annoying characteristics, even when you don't have any of them.

Accent Reduction Challenges and Opportunities

- **Social avoidance:** Some people can be more demanding than the average and might react in very negative ways when not being immediately understood or when not immediately understanding you. If that happens, sometimes they simply prefer to not interact with you in order to avoid frustration from their parts.
- **Employability:** A simple interview where your high skills and talents could be easily demonstrated might become a nightmare for you if you cannot express yourself in a way that is expected from the interviewer. According to a recent article which you can read by [clicking here](#), a strong accent might even affect an employee's wages, reducing it to 20% lower than an 'averagely-accented employee'.

Things can be very challenging for immigrants with strong accents due to the reasons above, that's the reason for accent reduction sessions to be more and more popular nowadays. **Speakable** has a developed accent reduction program for any interested person, with a special approach for Vietnamese Accent Reduction. Just [click here](#) for more information about our accent reduction program.

Even with some challenges, having a different accent in another country might represent some positive opportunities if you know how to use it in your favour:

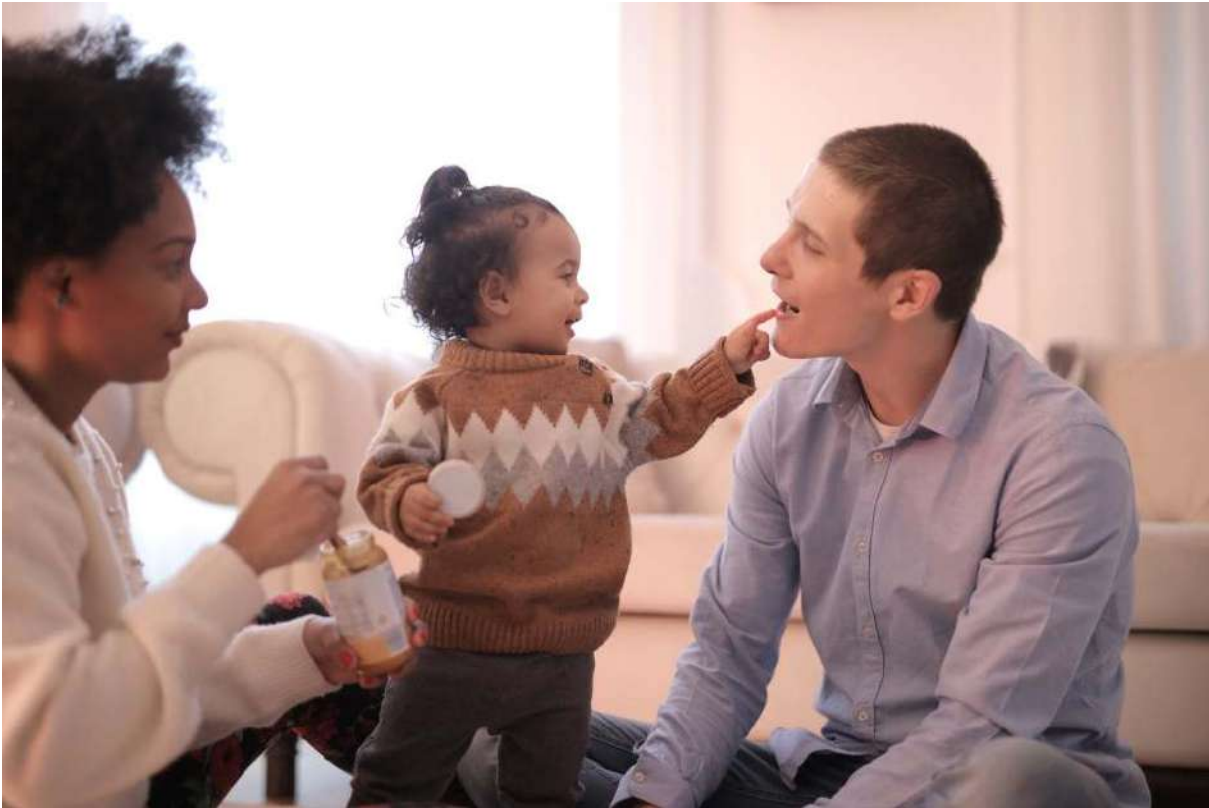
- **Icebreaker:** There will be occasions when a simple 'Hi, how are you?' spoken by you will draw attention and make people curious of where you are from. It is a great moment to introduce yourself to people you haven't met yet and even say interesting things about your country and culture.
- **Cultural allowances:** When people notice you are from a different country and culture, they will probably consider as 'normal' any different habit from yours. So, if you use cutlery in a different way, mix foods for apparently strange tastes, or even use different clothing and accessories, people will understand such things as cultural traits to be respected.
- **Group support:** You will hear people speaking with other accents, passing through the same difficulties and challenges, then all of you will understand you're not alone, because you understand one another and can become friends who support and motivate one another.

Accent Reduction Challenges and Opportunities

- **Relationships:** Why not explore the romantic side of accents? Some people simply get fascinated when listening to a specific accent. It can be an accent from any part of the world, popular or exotic. Maybe love at first hearing is as strong as love at first sight, so just allow yourself to use your accent in an understandable English and explore it!

If you have any question or interest in accent reduction programs, feel free to contact **Speakable** and learn more of our approach and team of professionals.

Identifying early signs of speech disorders in children



There are many aspects in life which can indicate higher chances of achieving happiness, fulfilment and social satisfaction. One of them is verbal communication, a skill which allows people create emotional bonds and collaborate towards common goals. Therefore, communication disorders pose a concerning threat for any individual's fulfilment, and parents and carers should intervene as soon as possible to help a child who demonstrate early signs of speech disorders. The list below can guide parents and carers to detect if there's a red flag which needs more attention or the proper investigation from a speech and language pathologist:

- Equal and excessive stress
- Inconsistent errors
- Increased difficulty with volitional vs. automatic speech responses
- Intensified errors or difficulty with longer or more complex syllable and word shapes

Identifying early signs of speech disorders in children

- Limited babbling
- Limited phonetic diversity
- Losing previously produced words
- Omissions, especially in word initial syllable shapes
- Preponderance use of simple syllable shapes
- Variation with babbling
- Vowel errors/distortions

Though the signs above are detected from speech and effort to speech, it is possible to identify other signs from different situations, such as below:

- Fine and/or gross motor skills delays
- Feeding difficulties (choking, poor manipulation of food etc.)
- General awkwardness or clumsiness
- Oral apraxia: impaired volitional oral movements, such as when trying to 'smile', 'kissing', 'puckering' etc.

It's always wonderful watching a child trying and achieving their communication milestones, but it's even more wonderful when helping them overcome difficulties in advance. Whenever you feel your child is showing early signs of speech disorders, search for support as soon as possible. Speakable's team of SLPs is ready to provide skills assessments and treatments programs, do not hesitate in [contacting us!](#)

8 tips to stimulate your working memory



Modern life and technology have provided many amazing opportunities for people to access information more easily, learn an uncountable amount of knowledge and become much more efficient and productive at work or at school. However, this new scenario has unveiled the limits of human brain, or highlighted learning disorders when dealing with such amount of information at the same time.

People get stressed due to an overwhelming overload of tasks to do at the same time or retaining attention to only one source of information. When under effect of these events, individuals might experience working memory issues, not being able to keep the attention to what is important and retaining the short-term memory regarding such events. People who already experience Alzheimer or a learning disorder such as ADD, ADHD, autism and similar ones can be even more affected by information overload.

In order to help you better handle threats to the working memory, we have listed 8 things that you can do:

- **Break information into big chunks.** Whenever you have to use a seemingly big information, break it into smaller ones that you can memorise them one by one.

8 tips to stimulate your working memory

- **Exploit checklists.** Whenever you have a sequence of things to do, a checklist (be it handwritten or digital) will be extremely helpful to organise ideas and the order to conduct each task.
- **Routines.** The more you do something one day after the other, the more your brain makes it automatic, so you don't even need to think about it.
- **Working memory stimulation activities.** Crossword puzzles, TV shows which challenge you to practice your knowledge, attending brain training programs and playing games which need high intellectual effort such as chess, all of these activities are good for the working memory to remain well.
- **Try different memorisation techniques.** You can create songs to sing about what you need to memorise, or simply visualise with your imagination the things you need to do, or tie a short string around a finger to remind you about something. The more you try, the earlier you discover the best techniques to retain information in your memory.
- **Avoid multitasking.** Sometimes, we accept too many activities to do or pay attention at the same time. Some people try that and fail because the needed attention to one or more of those tasks is higher than the given amount of attention.
- **Mindfulness to clean the senses.** Information overload is a daily phenomenon, so mindfulness activities are extremely important for modern days. Take some time everyday to simply feel what is around you, without thinking about problems or responding to multiple stimuli.
- **Physical activities.** Though related to mindfulness, practicing a physical activity will not only help you remove your mind away from information overload, but it's scientifically proved that such activities contribute to the health of brain cells.

Here you have many great opportunities to support the performance of your working memory. In the case of you need extra help with working memory stimulation sessions, Speakable is a licensed provider of **COGMED**. [Click here](#) to know more about this service that we can provide to you or someone you would like to refer to us.

Leap in! releases guide for future planning



Approximately 2.5 million Australians with a disability need to receive daily assistance with communication, mobility, reading, self-care or meal preparation. Almost 360,000 of them are children under 15. Parents and carers tend to suffer from anxiety regarding the future of their children, which also affects their understanding and expectations related to future planning. In order to support parents and carers in future planning for their children with a disability severe enough to receive daily assistance, the disability charity [Leap In!](#) released an e-book to work as a guide to parents and carers towards an efficient future planning for their children. The guide provides very useful information such as:

- Long-term care
- How you can support independence
- Legal and financial considerations
- Wills and trusts including Special Disability Trusts

- Appointing an administrator or guardian

Other important information the reader can retrieve from the guide is about:

- Self-care and emotional support
- Emergency planning
- NDIS-related resources
- Decision making and future planning
- Guardianship and administrators
- Capacity building
- Attending university

You can access the whole e-book to read it online or download by [clicking here](#). Whenever you feel you need help in managing plans for your family and children, please feel free to contact Speakable and talk to our parental coaching specialists, who will be always ready to provide assistance. [Click here](#) to know more about our Coaching for Parents service.

NEWS: 2021 NSW School Term Dates



Calendar 2021

January

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31						2
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August

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October

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November

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Key dates

Term start and end dates*

Term 1 (Eastern) – 27 Jan to 1 Apr 2021

Term 1 (Western) – 3 Feb to 1 Apr 2021

Term 2 – 19 Apr to 25 June 2021

Term 3 – 12 July to 17 Sept 2021

Term 4 – 5 Oct to 17 Dec 2021

Staff development days

All schools – 19 Apr, 12 July and 17 Dec 2021

Eastern – 27 Jan and 28 Jan 2021

Western – 3 Feb and 4 Feb 2021

School vacation dates 2021

Summer (Eastern) – 21 Dec 2020 to 26 Jan 2021

Summer (Western) – 21 Dec 2020 to 2 Feb 2021

Autumn – 5 Apr to 16 Apr 2021

Winter – 28 June to 9 July 2021

Spring – 20 Sept to 1 Oct 2021

Summer (Eastern) – 20 Dec 2021 to 27 Jan 2022

Summer (Western) – 20 Dec 2021 to 3 Feb 2022

Education Week

26 to 30 July 2021

Exam dates

Selective high school placement test – 11 Mar 2021

NAPLAN paper test – 11 to 13 May 2021

NAPLAN online test window – 11 to 21 May 2021

Opportunity class placement test – 21 July 2021

HSC written examinations – 12 Oct to 4 Nov 2021

Public holidays



Scan me for practical school tips!

To help your child get the most out of their school year and to explore our resources, check out our parents and carers hub at education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers.

School zone speed limits apply on all school days, including school development days.

* Check with your school as starting and finishing dates may change.

2021 NSW term and vacation dates*

Term 1

Eastern division – Wednesday 27 January - Thursday 1 April

Western division – Wednesday 3 February - Thursday 1 April

Autumn vacation – Monday 5 April - Friday 16 April

Term 2

Monday 19 April - Friday 25 June

Winter vacation – Monday 28 June - Friday 9 July

Term 3

Monday 12 July to Friday 17 September

Spring vacation – Monday 20 September to Friday 1 October

Term 4

Tuesday 5 October to Friday 17 December

Summer vacation

Eastern division – Monday 20 December - Thursday 27 January 2022

Western division – Monday 20 December - Thursday 3 February 2022

2021 school development days

Parents and carers **should not** bring their child to school on school development days.

- Eastern division – 27 January, 28 January 2021
- Western division – 3 February, 4 February 2021
- All schools – 19 April, 12 July, 17 December 2021

*Check with your local school as some dates may change. Note: [School speed zones](#) apply on all school days, including school development days.

Amazing mobile apps for learning stimulation



Mobile apps are a permanent aid for a huge number of activities of our daily life. We can control our appointments, make notes, entertain ourselves, find necessary information, automate certain activities, and even stimulate learning skills. Though learning stimulation apps are very useful, they are not able to solve any learning difficulty, but can be used as a reinforcement. Here is a useful list of apps to help you or your cared ones with learning difficulties:

- **Epic!** Especially for children who struggle with reading or are simply reluctant with reading activities, this e-library presents more than 20,000 children's books (both fiction and nonfiction ones) and educational videos. Access it by [clicking here](#).
- **Khan Academy Kids.** Reading, writing and maths skills are stimulated by this free app, which offers games and engaging visual elements. It is not focused on children with learning disabilities but can be extremely helpful to them. Access it by clicking [here](#) or [here](#).

Amazing mobile apps for learning stimulation

- **LetterSchool.** Preschool and primary skills are stimulated by this app, with the opportunity to also stimulate fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. It helps children acquire knowledge and skills related to letter formation, letter sounds and names, spelling, counting and others by guiding them to tap, touch and trace colourful animations. Access it by [clicking here](#).
- **My PlayHome.** Verbalisation, social and emotional skills and language skills are stimulated by this app, which allows the user to create and conduct the actions of a family of up to 15 characters, whose stories can be created and shared with other people. Access it by [clicking here](#).
- **SoundingBoard.** Focused on users who are unable to speak or who have limited speaking skills, this augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) presents preloaded boards with symbols which reproduce as verbal messages. Access it by [clicking here](#).
- **Speechify.** According to the app's developers, this mobile application was made especially for people with Dyslexia, ADHD and low vision. It transforms any text into an audiobook to keep the user focused and able to retain more information from the text. Access it by clicking [here](#) or [here](#).
- **Tales2Go.** This one-month trial app presents a comprehensive list of stories and books for all age ranges as audiobooks, for users who struggle with reading. The app also helps stimulate the users' listening skills. Access it by [clicking here](#).
- **Todo Maths.** More than 2,000 maths gamified activities are ready for the users of this app, including counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication and other functions. To help specific learning difficulties, it also offers the OpenDyslexic font option, a simplified keypad and 8 language options. Access it by clicking [here](#) or [here](#).

These eight mobile apps above can be very helpful to stimulate your children's learning skills in many areas from language to Maths, but they alone do not solve any learning difficulty, especially the more complex or severe ones. In case you notice you or a cared one need special approaches towards learning skills, Speakable can help you understand what can be done with therapy sessions to stimulate such learning skills.

[Click here](#) to know more about our services!

6 tips to increase your confidence when communicating



Any social environment has its own ‘hierarchy’ of people whose voice is more respected, more listened, more followed. These people can help others reflect or decide different things with their contributions, but sometimes other people in the same social environment can contribute with the same quality inputs or even better ones, but for some reason they don’t. Sometimes they are too shy or become anxious and nervous when they need to expose their ideas, then they simply prefer to not participate with their ideas. In order to encourage reluctant communicators to feel more confident, we listed six useful tips below:

- **Clear views.** When you know exactly what you want to say or write, you can use the proper words and expressions to communicate these views with no possibility of misinterpretation by the audience. But don’t forget, you must adjust the language, jargons and expressions to the context of the audience.

6 tips to increase your confidence when communicating

- **Preparedness.** If you need to present a report at a company, or role play in a theatre play, or even give a simple opinion among friends at a bar or restaurant, you must be prepared for what you need to say. You need the arguments fresh in your mind, you must be ready for people questioning and asking for more evidence, be aware of unexpected participations.
- **Conscience of limits.** Depending on the audience and how they want to question your arguments, you might feel intimidated and might use questionable arguments. If you get to this moment, your credibility in the topic decreases. Therefore, know the limits of the 'good' arguments, the ones that everyone understands and can follow to a consensus, and stick to them.
- **Invite to discussion.** If you have explained an important topic, find some time before going to the next topic to invite the audience to discuss, question or comment anything they might feel interesting. By doing this, you can fix the message among the audience and have an even more solid ground to start the next topic.
- **Adjustment to social hierarchy.** Sometimes, there will be someone in the group who is older, or from a higher corporate level, or specialised in something related to the topic you will talk about. Make sure you keep every member of the audience comfortable with the way you speak and the arguments you use. Don't intimidate people from a lower corporate level, but don't defer to a workmate just because that person is a higher-level colleague. Make sure everyone feels included and respected by their knowledge and viewpoints.
- **Be yourself, always.** Sometimes you might think that you should say or act like someone else because that person seems more admired when communicating. Just be aware that some characteristics are yours and should never be changed, while you can add some strategies to boost your communication skills. Learn how to differentiate them and keep your unique traits, they make you memorable when talking or writing to your audience.

These are just a small number of tips to reduce your reluctance to communicate your ideas to other people. If you want more support, feel free to contact us and learn about our Confidence Coaching program!

Activities to stimulate toddlers' language development



When children are in their toddler ages, an immeasurable number of events can happen on a single day which will affect their development in a significant way. As toddlers, they can learn very fast when they have the appropriate stimuli from parents, family members and other carers. We have listed some very simple but useful activities to be performed every day to stimulate a toddler's language skills:

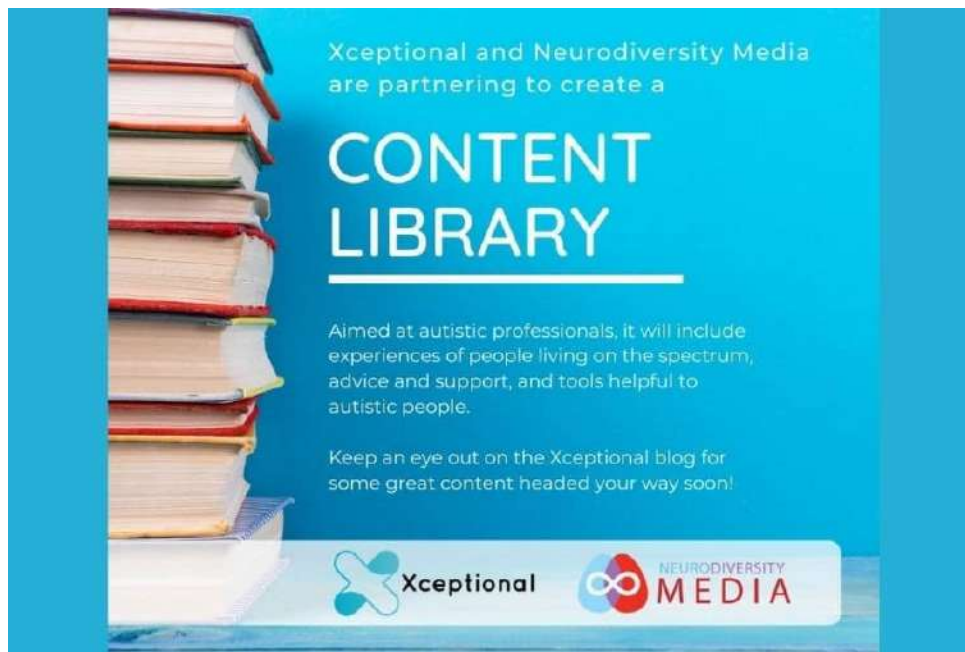
- **Reading Time.** Even if the child has no literacy skills and is learning how to handle a book, using a time every day to read for the child will always generate the assimilation of new vocabulary and stimulate the imagination. It could be a simple picture book in the beginning, evolving to simple storybooks and then to more complex ones throughout the years.

Activities to stimulate toddlers' language development

- **Sharing Short Stories.** Children have an extremely wealthy imagination, so it should be stimulated by making the child imagine a story being told or allowing the child to create a story from zero.
- **Imitation.** Sometimes, a toddler might express satisfaction through clapping hands, voicing a sound etc. When you imitate that 'victory gesture', you demonstrate that you recognise that accomplishment, making the child even prouder. Also, the child will feel more confident and will likely imitate your own gestures and speech, which will stimulate language skills.
- **Speaking in Turns and Intelligently.** A child needs to be treated with as much equality as possible. It means that you should not interrupt children when they're talking and talk as the adult that you are, with no changed voices or 'replacing the child' as if the child's speech came out from your mouth.
- **Label Things.** Even if children have no literacy skills yet, they can recognise and memorise shapes and sequences. This is why so many children can type their names on a keyboard not even knowing how to read each letter separately. By labelling objects and places at home, you can stimulate children recognise such 'name shapes', then you can use explore then letting the child point to labels and words on other places (books, TV, street signs) while hearing or already speaking such words.
- **Acknowledge Accomplishments.** A child is still learning and many times there is no proper way to understand when something was done properly. Actually, you are the one to make this clear, celebrating good deeds and accomplishments. You can say 'good job!', 'well done!' or anything alike, as well as smiling, clapping hands or doing anything else that prove that you recognise the child's accomplishment.
- **Music to Hear, Sing and Dance.** Music is a powerful tool to stimulate children's language and communication skills. Kinaesthetic skills can be also stimulated when you sing and dance. The more the child listens to music adequate to this developmental stage, the more the child will be able to build complex sentences, expand vocabulary and feel confident to communicate and socially interact.

The activities above are just a small number of possibilities to stimulate children's language skills. You probably have so many more strategies to share, let us know your experience! And if you want to learn new strategies and need some support to help your child with developmental challenges from any age, please visit our [Parental Coaching](#) page to know how we can help you!

Neurodiversity Media's Resource Library is launched



Through a successful partnership between the media vehicle [Neurodiversity Media](#) and the digital solutions developer [Xceptional](#), the [Resource Library](#) was released for the use of any person or entity, for free. Any person interest in accessing the content can join the **Resource Library** for free and read the many materials gathered about neurodiversity for the workplace. Among the main topics the user can find at the **Resource Library**, it's worth mentioning:

- How to thrive at work during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Networking for autistic professionals
- How to thrive at work without masking
- Highlight the work of managers who have learned to work with autistic professionals

The Resource Library is growing nonstop with more and more articles and studies regarding neurodiversity at the workplace, which is a valuable source of information for organisations aiming to make their workplaces more inclusive and integrated.

[This video](#) demonstrates the kind of interview and content that is available at the Resource Library.

Useful tips for a new school year



From Kindergarten to Year 12, children spend a large amount of time at school studying, making friends and doing many individual and collective activities. However, the end of every school year comes with anxiety, insecurity and other concerns from students. *'Will I fit in at this new school?'*, *'My best friend is moving to another school next year, how am I going to cope with it?'*, *'Year 12 is finishing, what's going to happen to my future?'*, and many other thoughts. Parents and teachers have a crucial role during the last weeks of each school year and also during the first years of the new school year, stimulating confidence, comfort, engagement, satisfaction and good studying habits over all students. Three very important aspects, if appropriately addressed by parents and teachers at the beginning of new school year, could ensure a great performance of children at school and their inner happiness in face of possible social challenges:

Useful tips for a new school year

- **Stay in school and keep up any needed subject.** Many students might feel embarrassed for staying more time at school studying, because they might be bullied by others. This extra effort will keep your good grades and reduce stress before exams or when you finish Year 12 thinking about [HSC marks and ATAR ranking](#).
- **Avoid wearing or using things which disrupt the environment. At the beginning.** If you start in a new school, you transitioned from primary to secondary school, or you are in a new class with different people, sometimes draw unnecessary attention might stress much more than any schoolwork. Students are learning about themselves, what they like or dislike, what is their own identity, but there is time throughout the year to start testing different clothes and objects.
- **Don't try to become someone else.** It might conflict with the previous tip, but do not forget: you just be careful to not draw too much attention at the very beginning, so you can avoid bully, or unwanted nicknames, or judging stares. When you meet your classmates, make friends and learns who's who at school, this is the perfect moment to reveal who you are. You like yellow socks? Put them on! Notebooks with k-pop groups on the cover? Go for it! Don't worry because you're not 'normal' or you don't like the same clothing, music or accents of other friends: you are amazing exactly the way you are, and you must be proud of that!

These three simple and very meaningful tips can ensure you the needed confidence for your next school year to be much better than your expectations, making great friends, communicating with everyone with less shyness and studying with no stress! Even for the ones finishing Year 12 and preparing for University next year, these tips can be very helpful!

NEWS: Speakable's Speakaboo Cards are available for customers



The Speakaboo Cards are finally packaged up and ready to go for 2021's reading and writing training for kids and their carers.

During the lockdown this year, the team and I spent time on designing these cards as a tool to help kids with their articulation, reading, memory, spelling and writing.

Learning these phonics is helping many children and especially one of them has gained over a year of reading after 4 months of training!

The cards are now available for kids and families to use. Digital files are also available and come with a Speakable pen! 😊

Much gratitude to our case manager & designer Henrique Santos and the [printing team Peter Tran](#) for their passion, skills & unwavering support. This is possible because of you! 😊

"Leaders are readers." Harry S Truman

Thank you for your time!

This was the third issue of our new Speakable Magazine, which compiled the articles and relevant news about communication, confidence and our clinic from 2020's school term 4.

In case you are interested in following Speakable's social media profiles and blog, please check the list below:

Speakable Blog: www.speakable.com.au/blog

Facebook Page: [@SpeakableOz](#)

Twitter Page: [@speakableoz](#)

LinkedIn Page: [@speakable-speech-language](#)

Instagram Page: [@speakable_speech_pathology](#)

Our address: [Suite 10, L2 79-85 Oxford St, 2022 Bondi Junction](#)

Phone: [02 8021 6356](#)

E-mail: admin@speakable.com.au