

# Welcome Kate, our new Speech Therapist

*A 12<sup>th</sup> grader will not volunteer answers in math class because he is afraid that the other students will laugh at him. A 7<sup>th</sup> grader cannot accurately explain the steps in today's science experiment to the rest of the class, and the teacher wonders why she did not prepare for the lab the night before. A 3<sup>rd</sup> grader says the correct answer to a question about a book he has read, but the teacher cannot understand him and tells him that his answer is wrong.*

At first glance, it may seem that these students simply have problems in math, science, and reading. However, they may also have underlying speech and language difficulties that are affecting their performance in class. Having sufficient communication skills is critical to a student's academic success. This area is often overlooked by schools, so I am very pleased that Ruamrudee recognizes the importance of identifying and treating speech and language disorders as part of an educational program.



My name is Kate Kelly, and I am the new speech-language therapist at RIS. I am originally from Farmington, Missouri in the United States. After receiving my undergraduate degree in Communication Disorders, I moved to Minnesota to pursue my master's degree in Speech Language Pathology at the University of Minnesota. Upon graduation, I stayed in Minnesota and began working as a speech-language therapist in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Last year, I began my international career by working with children at various international schools and preschools in Vienna, Austria. I am very excited to be here in Thailand and working with the RIS students and families!

The Speech-Language Therapy program at RIS provides evaluation and treatment of speech and language disorders in students from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Therapy is available for students with difficulties in the following areas:

- Articulation/Phonology:  
"pronunciation" of words
- Receptive Language:  
comprehension (understanding) of what others say
- Expressive Language:  
using words and sentences to express oneself effectively
- Fluency:  
ability to speak smoothly
- Voice:  
inappropriate volume, pitch, and/or vocal quality

While some children may need specialized therapy to address specific speech and language skills, there are many things that all parents can do to assist in their children's language development. Here are ten simple ideas for encouraging language use at home, in English and/or in the child's native language:

1. **Model** – If your child uses incorrect grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, model the sentence back to him/her correctly. If your child says "I gets an A on my tience project," you can say "You got an A on your ssscience project? Great job!"
2. **Comment** – Talk about what you are doing. You can describe even the most common actions – say what you are doing during each step in a meal preparation, a shopping trip, or a project around the house. Point out new objects and words to your child frequently.
3. **Questions** – Ask open-ended questions that require your child to think and express his/her thoughts. For example, ask "What happened at the zoo?" or "Tell me about the zoo" rather than "What animal did you see?" or "Did you see lots of animals?"

4. **Listen!** – Give your child time to tell you about his/her day and to respond to questions. Children will use more language if they know that someone is listening to them.

5. **Give choices** – Instead of asking yes/no questions, give your child choices. For example, instead of asking, "Do you want to play on the computer?" you can ask "Do you want to play on the computer, or do you want to draw a picture?" This requires more language use than simply saying "yes."

6. **Environment** – You can manipulate your child's environment in a way that requires them to use language. For example, you can give your child soup without a spoon, or put his/her favorite toy out of reach. This requires the child to ask for what they want.

7. **Read** – When reading a book with your child, ask him/her what is happening in a picture. Talk about the new vocabulary in the book. Predict what might happen next. At the end of the story, ask your child to tell the story back to you.

8. **Repeat** – If your child does not understand something you have said, repeat it slowly, emphasizing the key words.

9. **Relationships** – Talk about how words are related. If you go on a boat and an airplane on your next vacation, talk about how a boat is similar to a plane, and how it is different.

10. **Games** – Encourage the use of computer and board games that require language use. You can also create your own language games to use at any time. While you're traveling in the car, you can tell your child "I'm thinking of an animal that is black and white, but is not a zebra" and ask him/her to guess the animal. Or, ask your child to think of a word that "means that same thing as *begin* and rhymes with *heart*."