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Growing Well Together:

Collaborative Practices with Allied Health and Whānau for Tamariki and Rangatahi with Down Syndrome

Presented by:

Heidi Meyer - Speech and Language Therapist, Te Whatu Ora Hutt Valley,

Sara Edwards - Physiotherapist - Habit Health, Dunedin

Merryn Robertson - Physiotherapist - Hope in Motion Paediatric Therapy, Auckland

→ **12pm - 12.30pm | Tuesday 9 June, 2026 | [Hosted on Teams](#)**

This presentation shares the findings of a comprehensive literature review of physiotherapy and occupational therapy interventions, undertaken collaboratively by members of the Child Development and Disability Clinical Network (prior to its transition to the current Neurodevelopment Clinical Network) and the NZ Child and Youth Epidemiology Service at the University of Otago.

Focused on children and adolescents with Down syndrome, the session translates research into actionable clinical insights. Attendees will be directed to the full evidence table and a comprehensive reference list to support deep-dives into specific therapeutic modalities.

Links to pre-reading:

[Clinical Guideline: Down Syndrome \(Trisomy 21\) overview and general principles \(Starship\)](#)

[Whānau Resource: Down Syndrome In Children \(KidsHealth\)](#)

About the Speakers:

Heidi Meyer is a Speech-Language Therapist working at the Child Development Service, Hutt Valley. In this role, she is part of a multidisciplinary team working with young people through the developmental assessment process. She also works with tamariki to support safe feeding, eating, and drinking skills. Heidi is especially interested in working collaboratively with whānau and other professionals to provide holistic support for tamariki and rangatahi. Having an older sibling with Down syndrome has given her a valuable personal perspective and strengthened her passion for advocacy.

Sara Edwards is a Paediatric Physiotherapist at Habit Health in Dunedin with experience working with young people with Down syndrome. When the opportunity arose to assist with updating the Down Syndrome clinical guidelines, she readily agreed to contribute her expertise. Sara is passionate about the value of physiotherapy for people with Down syndrome and is committed to empowering families and individuals to advocate for physiotherapy support.

Merryn Robertson is an experienced physiotherapist working across health, education, and private practice to support the physical development of tamariki and rangatahi within their homes, schools, and clinic. She is dedicated to helping young people reach their full potential by integrating engaging fitness activities with evidence-based clinical care. As a passionate advocate for mobility, Merryn focuses on optimizing movement and reducing pain to enhance the overall wellbeing of the children and whānau she serves.

Access the session here



Contact us

If you would like to join our mailing list, have a suggestion for a topic or are interested in presenting at one of our workshops, [please get in touch](#).

For any technical issues or queries please reach out to the Neurodevelopment Network Project Coordinator, Kati Wilson, by email to neurodevelopment@paediatrics.org.nz or phone: 021 237 9903.