

Kate Beckett

Optima Speech Therapy



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The waiting list for children seeking speech and language services had been extensive before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, it has stretched to more than 30,000 children. And with 700 posts in children's disability services currently vacant, the wait for many of those children who need vital care is likely to go on for some time.

Kate Beckett, the founder of Optima Speech Therapy, is a speech and language professional working to empower parents to deliver an easy-to-use service for speech therapy at home. This bridges the gap between identifying an issue and receiving face-to-face speech therapy. Kate is also bringing a full range of custom-made resources to the speech therapy market including the first child speech sound avatar DARA (Digitised Automated Realistic Articulator) on her YouTube channel.

When parents make contact, Kate sends them an assessment document containing fun activities to carry out and video their child doing at home. The parents return the videos to Kate who compiles a report in which she advises on the appropriate speech and language programme.

Launched in June 2021, the company's success is underpinned by the Wicklow based speech therapist's YouTube channel, on which Kate posts instructional videos for parents and children on how to work on language activities and how to produce specific speech sounds. Alongside Kate, the star of these videos, DARA, teaches children how to use their tongue and lips to make a targeted sound.

She is also working on a book. This follows the setting up of her website, through which she sells resources to other speech and language therapists, teachers and assistants.

Kate has found great support from her ACORNS group. Having launched the business prior to starting ACORNS, she has found it particularly helpful to have a group of strong women to bounce ideas off while learning to balance both business and family.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine