

Position Description

Position title	Speech Pathologist Clinical Lead-Cleft Palate
Department / Division	Speech Pathology / Ambulatory Services
Classification	Grade 4 Year 1 to Grade 4 Year 4 (VW24—VW27)
Position reports to	Manager, Speech Pathology
No. of direct & indirect reports	Direct Reports 1 FTE; Indirect Reports 1 FTE
Location	The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville
Risk category	Category A - works in a direct patient contact role and has or potential to have exposure to blood or body fluids.

The Royal Children's Hospital
<p>The Royal Children's Hospital's (RCH) vision is <i>A world where all kids thrive</i>.</p> <p>RCH is located within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, with more than 45 world-class biomedical organisations and more than 50,000 of the brightest minds working together to make the Precinct number one in the Asia Pacific region for health, education, research, and training. Within this, RCH is also a cornerstone member of the Melbourne Children's Campus, partnering with Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The University of Melbourne Department of Paediatrics and The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation. Each organisation contributes to a paediatric academic health centre which is greater than the sum of its parts.</p> <p>RCH has cared for the children and young people of Victoria for more than 150 years since it was founded in 1870. A full range of paediatric and adolescent health services are provided plus tertiary and quaternary care for the most critically ill and medically complex patients in Victoria, Tasmania, southern NSW and other states around Australia and overseas. The RCH is the only provider of heart transplant services and CAR T-cell therapy for paediatrics in Australia. RCH is an effective advocate for patients and their families with a particular focus on vulnerable children and increasingly, mental health in young people. The hospital also supports many health promotion and prevention programs. The Hospital has more than 6,000 staff, a budget of \$850M, 12 wards and 350 beds. Annually, the RCH has 300,000+ Specialist Clinic appointments, 90,000+ Emergency Department presentations and 20,000 elective surgeries.</p> <p>We work collaboratively with hospitals to deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The RCH is committed to the Child Safe Standards https://www.rch.org.au/quality/child-safety/.</p> <p>RCH enjoys high employee engagement and is committed to staff safety and a positive culture through enactment of our Compact.</p> <p>Further information on RCH is available at www.rch.org.au</p>
ROLE CONTEXT
<p>This role is within the Speech Pathology Department at RCH which provides tertiary-level care to inpatient and outpatient paediatric populations with communication and swallowing disorders. Speech Pathologists work in a range of clinical areas including swallowing, feeding, speech, language, voice, cleft palate, and tracheostomy. The department sees children across inpatient wards (e.g., Neonatal Intensive Care, Paediatric Intensive Care, Respiratory, Neurology, General Medicine). Speech Pathologists also participate in outpatient clinics relating to communication development and swallowing. These include large multi-disciplinary clinics as well as joint clinics with smaller numbers of other health professionals and speech pathology-only clinics.</p>

ROLE PURPOSE
<p>The Grade 4 Speech Pathologist-Cleft provides specialist tertiary-level speech pathology services to children with cleft lip and palate with a high level of expertise, including children with cleft or non-cleft velopharyngeal incompetence (VPI). This role provides expertise in perceptual and instrumental assessments, diagnostic therapy, intervention, and summarising speech pathology assessment findings to assist medical colleagues in surgical decision-making. The role provides strong clinical and professional leadership within their stream, the wider Speech Pathology Department, and across Allied Health and RCH. This leadership role is actively involved in developing and improving RCH speech pathology cleft and VPI services, supervising and training of staff, and clinical research. They also lead key non-clinical portfolios within the department (e.g., external education for regional and metropolitan speech pathologists in management of cleft palate and VPI).</p>
KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES
<p>Provision of care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver excellent evidence-based speech pathology assessment and intervention to children attending RCH in area of clinical expertise. • Provide high-level leadership and expertise in tertiary-level care for paediatric patients in the clinical area of expertise across the speech pathology team at RCH and externally across the state. • Provide expert, authoritative judgement and advice on specialised tertiary-level clinical issues related to the clinical area of expertise. • Represents the profession at the state and national level regarding tertiary-level management in the clinical area of expertise. • Deliver education and training at networks, forums, hospitals, or statewide level. • Ensure timely provision of speech pathology services in the clinical stream through appropriate caseload prioritisation with consideration of multiple factors (e.g., patient need, evidence-based care, staffing, and organisational needs) • Plan for, and effectively manage, contingencies that may affect the performance of healthcare activities. • Maintain accurate documentation of all patient-related activity, including completion of all system-required data and EMR documentation for departmental, hospital, professional, and legal requirements. <p>Collaborative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with initiative, autonomy and lead others in the pursuit of team goals. • Lead collaboration across multidisciplinary teams and programs. • Lead and motivate staff to achieve interprofessional team goals and shared responsibility for care provision. • Act to resolve complex issues through common understanding of diverging interests, and mediating conflict situations as necessary. <p>Continuous Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the Speech Pathology quality improvement program and foster continuous improvement practises in area of clinical expertise. • Oversee the development, review, and implementation of management protocols and clinical services across the speech pathology team. • Lead the ongoing development, review and maintenance of administrative processes and communication mechanisms affecting clinical teams and patient care. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent and clear verbal and written communication skills. • Excellent interpersonal skills including interacting effectively with stakeholders to achieve agreed outcomes. • Facilitate open and effective communication across all levels of the speech pathology department and RCH. • Anticipate, identify, and address conflict in a constructive and respectful way.

- Ensure systems are in place for appropriate clinical handover and follow-up to maintain patient care.

Supervision, Leadership, and People Management

- Provide expert supervision to, and leadership of, RCH speech pathologists in area of clinical expertise.
- Lead people and programs operationally with accountability for financial and people management functions
- Lead change through collaboration with key stakeholders and show courage in acting for the long term.
- Make transparent decisions without favouritism or bias.
- Provide expert guidance and advice to assist others in resolving complex ethical and legal issues.
- Foster a culture in which leaders and managers are accessible and approachable for staff and develop strategies to reduce stress in the workplace and promote workplace wellbeing.
- Participate in clinical supervision in accordance with local standard operating procedures and/or the RCH Allied Health Clinical Supervision Guideline based on the DHHS Allied Health Clinical Supervision Framework.
- Provide clinical leadership and service delivery across other clinical programs and units as required due to varying service demands, as well as other non-clinical duties as delegated by the Speech Pathology Manager.
- Supervise and educate speech pathology students undertaking clinical placements.

Organisation and Planning

- Develop systems that support the review and reallocation of resources and identify potential gains in care provision or funding allocation
- Delegate healthcare activity according to team members' competence and practise scope, ensure workload management and prioritisation across the department, and assist staff to self-manage their workload.
- Lead improvements in the department management and function, strategic direction, and service planning.

Research

- Identify research gaps or opportunities within area of clinical expertise.
- Translate evidence into practice for service, department, or area of clinical specialty.
- Share information on current best practice for area of clinical specialty or service.
- Share research findings through a range of methods including conference abstracts or publications.
- Establish or support research partnerships within area of clinical expertise.
- Align departmental research plan with the RCH's research and strategic focus.
- May act as a research leader including leading research protocol development, publications or data analysis

Lifelong learning

- Develop and foster a lifelong learning culture in the department supporting grade 1, 2, and 3 speech pathologists to achieve professional goals through clinical support, supervision and performance reviews.
- Ensure processes, frameworks, and/or support tools are in place to enhance learning through reflection.
- Achieve and maintain competency in relevant skills required for the role, as per departmental requirements.
- Foster a culture where feedback is a positive strategy to enhance goals, awareness, and learning; regularly seek and participate in 2-way feedback of own performance, acting to improve performance as appropriate.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential:

- Bachelor of Speech Pathology or equivalent tertiary qualification
- Eligibility for certified practising membership of Speech Pathology Australia
- Extensive experience in the provision of speech pathology services to children with cleft lip and/or palate
- Demonstrated experience in the leadership and management of a clinical Speech Pathology team
- Post-graduate qualification relevant to the role at Master or PhD level (or significant progress towards)
- Meets the requirements of the Speech Pathology Australia Professional Self-Regulation program
- Upholds the Speech Pathology Australia Code of Conduct

Desirable:

- Minimum of 10 years of relevant clinical and leadership experience in cleft lip and/or palate
- Experience in both paediatric swallowing and communication disorders
- Highly developed communication, interpersonal, and organisational skills
- Experience working in an acute paediatric hospital setting
- Experience in the education and supervision of speech pathologists and students.
- Active involvement in speech pathology research including relevant publication in peer reviewed journals

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Demonstrated high-level expertise in assessment and intervention of infants, children, and adolescents with cleft lip and/or palate including perceptual and instrumental assessments and analyses.
- Demonstrated experience in workload and team management, and the ability to prioritise needs and service delivery across a team as well as the broader department and organisation.
- Demonstrated experience in supervision of speech pathologists and ability to manage work performance at expected levels.
- Demonstrated ability to lead research, continuous quality improvement and service development.
- Demonstrates skills in teaching and education in areas of expertise.
- Demonstrated ability to work flexibly in a fast-paced, dynamic environment covering caseloads as directed
- Highly developed written and verbal communication skills including maintaining accurate, high quality, timely documentation relating to patient care and department processes/projects
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective and positive working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders.
- Demonstrated high-level ability to reflect on own performance and receptivity to feedback.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Employees are required to undertake a National Criminal Record Check and a Working with Children Check prior to commencing employment
- Employees are required to maintain a valid Working with Children's Check throughout their employment
- A current, full driver's licence for the State of Victoria which is appropriate for the type of vehicle being driven, and comply with any restrictions on their licence (e.g. wearing glasses) while undertaking hospital duties (if applicable)
- Employees are required to maintain compliance with RCHs "Staff Immunisation - Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases" procedure.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All employees are required to adhere to the Royal Children's Hospital Values:

- Curious - We are creative, playful and collaborative
- Courageous - We pursue our goals with determination, ambition and confidence
- Inclusive - We embrace diversity, communicate well, build connections and celebrate our successes together
- Kind - We are generous, warm and understanding

RCH COMPACT

All new and existing employees commit to the RCH Compact to contribute to a strong and respectful culture.

- We do better work caring for children and families when we also care for each other
- I bring a positive attitude to work – I share, I laugh, I enjoy other's company
- I take responsibility for my behaviour and its impact on others
- I am curious and seek out ways to constantly learn and improve
- I celebrate the good stuff, the small stuff, the big stuff – it all matters
- I speak up when things aren't right
- I value the many different roles it takes to deliver great patient care
- I actively listen because I want to understand others and make better decisions
- I am inclusive and value diversity
- When it comes to teamwork, I don't hold back – I'm all in

QUALITY, SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT

RCH employees have a responsibility and accountability to contribute to the organisation's commitment to Quality, Safety and Improvement by:

- Acting in accordance and complying with all relevant Safety and Quality policies and procedures
- Identifying risks, reporting and being actively involved in risk mitigation strategies
- Participating in and actively contributing to quality improvement programs
- Complying with the requirements of the National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards
- Complying with all relevant clinical and/or competency standards
- Complying with the principles of Patient and Family Centred Care that relate to this position

The RCH is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, all members of the LGBTQI community and people with disability.

Position description last updated

July 2025