

Position Description

Position title:	Speech Pathologist – Neonatal
Department:	Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy & Speech Pathology
Classification:	Grade 2 Speech Pathologist (VW1-VW4)
Agreement:	Allied Health Professionals (Victorian Public Health Sector) Single Interest Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026)
Reporting to:	Manager - Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy & Speech Pathology

About us

Located in Melbourne on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the Royal Women's Hospital is Australia's first and leading specialist hospital for women and newborns. We offer expertise in maternity services, neonatal care, gynaecology, assisted reproduction, women's health and cancer services. We advocate for women's health in areas that have long been overlooked or stigmatised, including abortion, endometriosis, family violence, female genital mutilation, menopause, women's mental health, sexual assault and substance use in pregnancy.

Our vision, values and declaration

The Women's vision, values and declaration reflect our promise to our patients and consumers, and articulate our culture and commitment to our community and each other.

Our vision is '**Creating healthier futures for women and babies**'. Our values are:



Courage



Passion



Discovery



Respect

The Women's declaration reflects the principles and philosophies fundamental to our hospital, our people and our culture.

- **We are committed to the social model of health**
- **We care for women from all walks of life**
- **We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare**
- **We are a voice for women's health**
- **We seek to achieve health equity**

Our commitment to inclusion

The Women's is committed to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment which enhances staff and consumer wellbeing and nurtures a sense of belonging. We strongly encourage anyone identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to join us. We offer a range of programs and services to support First Nations employees. We invite people with disability to work with us, and we welcome anyone who identifies as linguistically, culturally and/or gender diverse, people from the LGBTQIA+ community and people of any age.

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.

About the department/unit

The Department provides Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Pathology services to patients of the Women's and encompasses the clinical streams of Women's Health and Neonatal care. The department is part of the Allied Health and Clinical Support Services Directorate.

Our aims are:

- To provide a high quality, safe and effective service that meets the needs of Victorian women and newborns
- To provide an efficacious, innovative and evidence-based model of care
- Undertake clinical research that is relevant to community needs
- To provide a sustainable learning environment for current and future clinicians

Position purpose

This Speech Pathologist role will provide assessment and interventions to infants and neonates in the Intensive Care and Special Care units, and in outpatient follow-up clinics. The role ensures evidenced-based practice, and a philosophy of individualised support underpins all elements of clinical care.

The role consults with nursing, medical, allied health, and parents/carers regarding strategies to optimise infant oral motor skill development, including recognising and responding to behavioural cues, the prevention of physiologic compromise and secondary complications, as well as delays in communication, swallowing, feeding or development. It aims to maximise the parent/carer's capacity and confidence in helping their infant achieve developmental goals, develop personal strengths, and improve quality of life.

Key responsibilities

Clinical Expertise/Skills

- Work within an integrated, multidisciplinary team to provide safe assessment and treatment of infants with communication and swallowing/feeding disorders in Intensive, Special Care and outpatient feeding clinic. This may include assistance in education of staff in the unit and being involved in the development and implementation of developmentally supportive care practices, as directed.
- Provide student supervision as delegated and appropriate.
- Participate in multidisciplinary training sessions and orientation sessions as requested.
- Assist in coordination of referrals for infants requiring assessment and develop treatment plans in consultation with families and staff within the unit and in relevant outpatient follow-up clinics
- Ensure that discharged patients are referred to adequate follow-up therapy as appropriate.
- Attend the appropriate clinical meetings to assess relevance and results of service provision and learn about the patient experience.
- Maintain accurate clinical documentation to collect and collate service provision data.

Safe practice and environment

- Maintain an understanding of individual and team responsibility for patient safety, quality & risk and contribute to organisational quality and safety initiatives.

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, your colleagues, and members of the public, including but not limited to occupational health and safety considerations, infection prevention and control, etc.
- Actively participate in credentialing and scope of practice processes.
- Comply with requirement of National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements, and legislation.

Practice improvement and service development

- Continue to develop professional skills and knowledge with a high level of motivation and dedication through self-directed learning, observation of others, and by engaging in agreed and approved professional development activities. Maintain an up-to-date record of this.
- Participate in mandatory training.
- Assist with educational sessions to all Intensive and Special Care staff regarding discipline-specific aspects of developmental care, such as supporting the transition to oral feeds.
- Maintain knowledge of evidence-based technological and technical advances in therapeutic methods relevant to your specific allied health discipline. Use this knowledge to promote a culture of continuous practice and service improvement (within the department and relevant teams), and life-long learning.
- Participate in a variety of research activities in neonatal development research and other relevant areas of practice/interest and/or undertake clinical audits, as delegated.
- Maintain the standards, condition and safety of equipment and advise on Speech Pathology equipment needs.
- Assist with review or development of procedures, guidelines, and frameworks for the department/neonatal allied health care, as requested.

Information and data management

- Ensure adequate and appropriate clinical documentation in medical records including via electronic medical record (EMR).
- Work within the guidelines of the appointments and reporting systems in the department.

Professional responsibilities

- Adhere to the Women's and professional codes of conduct and code of ethics.
- Actively participate in orientation program to the role, team, and organisation.
- Deliver Neonatal Developmental Therapy services in line with the neonatal model of care, the Women's Statement of Priorities, Neonatal Services' Operational and Service goals, departmental goals, and key performance indicators (KPIs) and other project deliverables.
- Actively engage in the performance development review process annually.
- Contribute to the strategic and operational planning of the Women's Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology Department under the guidance of senior clinicians.
- Plan and manage own workload to ensure adequate time for achievement of objectives.
- Foster teamwork and information sharing among all disciplines within the Women's.
- Attend all meetings relevant to the position.
- Perform other duties as directed and requested.

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.

Communication

- Communicate effectively with patients, family members, staff, and departments individually and as part of a team to deliver high quality patient care outcomes.
- Demonstrate excellence in customer service communications especially patient/parent/carer contact to ensure understanding and informed consent.
- Hand over any relevant information relating to planned work, work in progress, and significant events to colleagues.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

KPIs are how you will be measured as meeting the responsibilities of the position. These will be set with you as part of your Performance Development Plan within the first six months of your appointment to the position.

Key selection criteria

Experience/qualifications/attributes

- Relevant undergraduate/qualifying degree in Speech Pathology
- Postgraduate experience in assessment and intervention of paediatric feeding difficulties and early communication skills for medically complex infants and their development
- Meets eligibility criteria for Speech Pathology Australia's Certified Practicing Speech Pathologist (CPSP) membership.
- Evidence of continuous professional development in line with registration requirements.
- Demonstrated performance in patient- and family-centred care approach, developmental care models in a neonatal setting, that shows an understanding of the impact of the intensive care experience on parents/carers.
- Demonstrated clinical knowledge and skills for providing speech pathology for a caseload of infants (often premature) with complex needs, including (but not limited to), Trisomy 21, cleft lip and palate, generalised hypotonia, congenital heart disease and laryngomalacia.
- Demonstrated knowledge of pre-term and full-term infant development, current literature and research in the areas of infant feeding and swallowing and early communication skills development, intensive care technologies and the intensive care environment and the impact of the environment on the infant's homeostasis.
- Proficiency and accuracy in a range of computer programs and platforms especially Microsoft Office 365, search engines, electronic medical records, etc.
- Ability to effectively work within a multidisciplinary team and have received positive feedback about the same.

Desirable:

- Experience in instrumental swallowing assessment and an understanding of when to refer for further swallowing investigations.
- Understanding of referral pathways for high-risk infants in Victoria.
- Acute hospital experience in management of acute infant feeding difficulties.

Organisational Relationships

Internal relationships:

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.

- Director of Allied Health and Clinical Support Services
- Director of Allied Health Research
- Allied Health administrative and other administrative staff
- Multidisciplinary team members and shift team leaders
- All RWH clinical and non-clinical staff

External relationships:

- Patients, visitors and their families/carers
- Other health services and external agencies that engage with our departments
- Staff at other medical facilities
- Universities and specialised training facilities
- Special interest groups and communities of practice

Inherent requirements

Inherent requirements are the essential tasks and activities that must be carried out in order to perform this role, including with adjustments. The Women's is committed to providing workplace adjustments that support all people to work with us. We welcome you to discuss any adjustments with the manager of this role during the recruitment process or at any time during your employment, as we acknowledge and understand circumstances can change. You can also request a copy of our workplace adjustments procedure for more information.

Physical demands	Frequency
Shift work – rotation of shifts – day, afternoon and night	Not applicable
Sitting – remaining in a seated position to complete tasks	Frequent
Standing – remaining standing without moving about to perform tasks	Frequent
Walking – floor type even, vinyl, carpet,	Frequent
Lean forward/forward flexion from waist to complete tasks	Frequent
Trunk twisting – turning from the waist to complete tasks	Frequent
Kneeling – remaining in a kneeling position to complete tasks	Occasional
Squatting/crouching – adopting these postures to complete tasks	Occasional
Leg/foot movement to operate equipment	Occasional
Climbing stairs/ladders – ascending and descending stairs, ladders, steps	Occasional
Lifting/carrying – light lifting and carrying less than 5 kilos	Rare
– Moderate lifting and carrying 5 – 10 kilos	Occasional
– Heavy lifting and carrying – 10 – 20 kilos.	Rare
Push/pull of equipment/furniture – light push/pull forces less than 10 kg	Occasional
– moderate push / pull forces 10 – 20 kg	Occasional
– heavy push / pull forces over 20 kg	Rare
Reaching – arm fully extended forward or raised above shoulder	Occasional
Head/neck postures – holding head in a position other than neutral (facing forward)	Rare
Sequential repetitive actions in short period of time	
– Repetitive flexion and extension of hands wrists and arms	Occasional
– Gripping, holding, twisting, clasping with fingers/hands	Occasional
Driving – operating any motor-powered vehicle with a valid Victorian driver's license.	Not applicable
Sensory demands	Frequency
Sight – use of sight is integral to most tasks completed each shift	Prolonged/constant
Hearing – use of hearing is an integral part of work performance	Prolonged/constant
Touch – use of touch is integral to most tasks completed each shift	Prolonged/constant
Psychosocial demands	Frequency
Observation skills – assessing/reviewing patients in/outpatients	Prolonged/constant
Problem solving issues associated with clinical and non-clinical care	Frequent
Working with distressed people and families	Frequent
Dealing with aggressive and uncooperative people	Occasional

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.

Dealing with unpredictable behaviour	Occasional
Exposure to distressing situations	Occasional

Definitions used to quantify frequency of tasks/demands as above

Prolonged/constant	70 – 100 % of time in the position
Frequent	31 – 69 % of time in the position
Occasional	16 – 30% of time in the position
Rare	1 – 15% of time in the position
Not applicable	0% of time in the position

Employee Responsibilities and Accountabilities

- Employees are required to be aware of, and work in accordance with, hospital policies and procedures.
- Employees are required to identify and report incidents, potential for error and near misses, to improve knowledge systems and processes and create a safe environment for staff and patients.
- Employees agree to provide evidence of a valid employment Working with Children Check and provide complete details for the Women's to undertake a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC).
- Our vision is a future free from violence and discrimination in which healthy, respectful relationships are the norm. The Women's expects all staff to contribute to a culture that promotes and supports diversity, equity, respect and inclusion.
- The Women's provides pregnancy termination services as part of its public health responsibility to provide safe health care to women.

Staff Vaccination Requirements

As this role has direct physical contact with patients and clinical environments, employees are required to be vaccinated against or demonstrate immunity to influenza, COVID-19, whooping cough (pertussis), hepatitis B, chicken pox, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and may include hepatitis A, and complete screening for tuberculosis.

Employment with the Women's is conditional upon the provision of satisfactory evidence of vaccination and/or screening, and we may withdraw an offer of employment if the required evidence is not provided at least five business days prior to the intended start date.

Declaration

By accepting this position description electronically I confirm I have read, understood and agreed to abide by the responsibilities and accountabilities outlined.

Developed date: July 2025

Developed by: Manager - Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology

Date of next review: July 2026

Find the exceptional in your everyday.

The Women's, where you belong.