

MEDIA RELEASE

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Oticon Foundation of New Zealand

NEW GUIDE IN TE REO FOR MĀORI CHILDREN WITH HEARING AIDS

Māori children with hearing aids are being targeted with a new story book in te reo Māori to help them understand and take care of their hearing aids.

The Oticon Foundation is launching “Ō Taonga Whakarongo - He aratohu hei āwhina i ngā tamariki rātou ko te whānau kia mārama ai, kia tiaki pai ai i ā rātou taonga whakarongo” (Your Hearing Aids - a guide for helping children and their families understand and take care of their hearing aids).

Two to three of every thousand New Zealand children wear hearing aids, and Māori children are significantly more likely to have a hearing loss than other members of the community.

“Providing the OtiKids “Your Hearing Aids” booklet in te reo Māori provides hearing impaired Māori children, their whānau, teachers and caregivers with quality Te Reo resources to give them a better understanding of the child’s hearing aids and the hearing solutions used to help them reach their full potential,” says Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Oticon Foundation.

The new guide is released today – to mark Deaf Awareness Week 2006.

The University of Auckland’s Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre is positive about the new resource for children and their families.

“Part of our role at the University of Auckland is to reach out into the community to help educate and make people aware of hearing issues,” says Professor Peter Thorne, Head of Audiology at the University of Auckland.

“Having this sort of resource is a step in the right direction to ensure more people know about the difference hearing solutions like hearing aids can make and to break down barriers to finding out how to make the most of them,” he says.

The Ō Taonga Whakarongo booklet provides useful tips about how to put your hearing aid on, how to take care of it, tips on use with computers – and a reminder to keep them away from pets.

“Dogs and cats can get very curious about hearing aids when they are not in use, especially if they are left turned on and are whistling sitting on the bench. It’s very common for hearing aids to need repairing because the dog ate them,” says Ms Pullar.

“The Oticon Foundation hopes the new translated booklet will help more children and families get the most out of their child’s hearing aid by providing user friendly tips and hints.”

The Māori and English versions of the booklet can be viewed on the Oticon Foundation’s Website: www.oticon.org.nz under “publications”. The booklets are being provided to hearing care professionals throughout New Zealand and are available from the Oticon Foundation on email info@oticon.org.nz or phone 0800 684 266.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in October 1976. It is a charitable trust of Oticon New Zealand Limited and it aims to improve the lives of the hearing impaired in New Zealand through communication and knowledge.

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For more information please contact: Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand. Phone 04 473 3330 or 021 647 330.