

# the right read

## book review

Review by Leela Barrock

### Making Chatter Matter

**Author:** Jennifer Eileen Peters

**Publisher:** Nurture Books

**Price:** RM39.90

**ONE** of the hardest things for any parent to go through is admit that there is something "wrong" with a beloved child. "Wrong" as in not "normal" or unable to do something which the average child would accomplish almost matter-of-factly. Like, speak.

The point at which realisation dawns is soul wrenching, and, in most cases, life-altering, because this is not something which can be fixed with a jab or a course of antibiotics.

This is a long-term problem and the kind

of commitment which can be draining both financially and emotionally.

This is precisely why Jennifer Aileen Peters' first published work, *Making Chatter Matter*, is important, something that any parent or anyone else concerned with the language development of a child must read.

*Chatter* starts as an academic exercise. The first five chapters detail and define what delayed speech is, the various schools of thought on the subject, the use of language in a multi-lingual environment and how language is used as a tool of learning.

What saves this part from becoming too bogged down in academic discourse are illustrative paragraphs for which Peters uses her young patients as case studies.

Peters has a knack for identifying an issue,

zeroing in on it and then repackaging it for the understanding of the pedestrian parent.

In chapter six, she gets down to the nuts and bolts of the problem and the rudiments of therapy. She emphasises, among others, the importance of the home environment, the role of the parents and grabbing every opportunity to talk to the child.

In the last chapter, Peters deals with FAQs such as "Will my child be able to 'catch up' with other children?", and of course what must be the most important question of all, "How long will it take to solve the problem?"

Though some of this may sound elementary, having gone through language therapy with my son for almost two years, I can testify that for those of us for whom things have come naturally and effortlessly,

taking things a single, slow and painful step at a time is not easy.

In the same way getting through *Chatter* for me was a slow and painful exercise, because it was personal.

But it does get easier to get through because despite her academic approach, Peters has a specific talent for getting her difficult message across – chatter does matter.

*Making Chatter Matter* is available at MPH Bookstores or email for details at [carespeech@yahoo.com](mailto:carespeech@yahoo.com).

