
FACILITATING FLUENT SPEECH



IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT STUTTERING:

- Stuttering/dysfluency is more common in males than females and tends to run in families.
- There are no known causes of stuttering. Current research has investigated neuromuscular factors and heredity as contributing factors.
- Parents do not cause stuttering.
- Stuttering is not a psychological disorder.
- Stress and anxiety aggravate dysfluency.
- There are no magical, quick cures; however, with intervention, stuttering can be controlled.

TIPS FOR BOTH PARENTS & TEACHERS:

1. Be a good listener.

- Show interest in what the child is saying by looking at him/her and maintaining eye contact when he/she is talking to you. Give the child your full attention
- Do not interrupt the child by filling in words when he/she is 'stuck'. Allow him/her to finish what he/she is saying.
- Do not make suggestions about improving the child's speech. Comments such as "slow down", "think before you talk" and, "stop and take a deep breath" etc. should be avoided.
- Be interested in what the child is saying, rather than how he/she is saying it.

2. Reduce stress.

- Reduce competition in speaking by encouraging calm turn-taking.
- A calm and collected atmosphere is more conducive to fluent speech.
- Do not put the child on display by asking him/her to recall stories, recite poetry etc. in front of others.
- Give the child lots of time to speak and avoid time pressure.

3. Be aware of your own speech.

- Use a slow rate and speak in a gentle manner. Pause for one second before answering or responding to the child.
- By speaking more slowly and putting more pauses between words, the child may be able to follow your fluent model.
- Especially for young children, you may wish to reduce the complexity of your own speech by using short, simple sentences.





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4. React appropriately.

- Don't pretend that you don't notice the stutter, yet avoid reacting with emotion, impatience or embarrassment. If you talk about the stuttering directly, tell the child that you've noticed the difficulty while reassuring him/her that everyone has difficulties with some things.
- Encourage understanding attitudes and discourage teasing.
- Remember that stuttering usually goes up and down. Don't praise the child too much when stuttering decreases. When it comes back, the child may feel bad because he/she wants to please you.

5. Provide chances for success.

- Increase opportunities for talking on good days and plan activities that require less talking on days when speech is difficult.
- On days when speaking is difficult, try to ask questions that can be answered with short, definite responses.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

- You may wish to speak to the child privately. Explain that the stuttering does not bother you and you want him to share his/her ideas, feelings and learning with you. In this way you let the student know that you are aware of the stuttering and accept it.
- Give chances for leadership in non-talking activities such as physical activities/gym and assign duties that do not require speaking.
- Try to avoid going up and down the rows when calling on students. A person who stutters may become increasingly anxious when he/she knows his/her turn is coming.
- Encourage but do not force the child to participate in speaking situations. Build the student's confidence in his/her ability to handle speaking situations even as a dysfluent speaker.
- If the child is new to your class, ask questions that can be answered with relatively few words until he/she adjusts to the class (e.g., yes/no, what, where, when questions).
- Although some children who stutter can read aloud fluently, others become very dysfluent when reading. Allow these students to read in unison with other children.
- Avoid having the child compete in activities involving quick verbal responses (e.g. flash cards, number cards).