

## Normal Disfluency vs Stuttering:

### Normal Disfluencies:

- The normally disfluent child occasionally repeats syllables or words, li-li-like this. Disfluencies may also include hesitations and the use of fillers such as “uh,” “er,” “um.”
- Disfluencies occur most often between ages 1 1/2 and 5 years, and they tend to come and go. They are usually signs that a child is learning to use language in new ways. If disfluencies disappear for several weeks, then return, the child may just be going through another stage of learning.

**Stuttering:** Children ages 4 or older with some or all of the following symptoms lasting longer than 6-12 months:

### A. Disfluencies:

#### Repetitions:

- Part-Word: repeating a sound/syllable within a word. Ex: (“W-W-W-Where are you going?”)
- Single-Word: repeating a single word in a sentence. Ex: (“I-I-I-I-I went to the park.”)
- Phrase: repeating a phrase within a sentence. Ex: (“I went-I went-I went to the park.”)

**Blocking:** Occurs when the speaker gets stuck during the production of a sound/word, leading to stoppage of the forward movement of speech. Ex. (“I went to the PA – silence – RK yesterday.”)

**Prolongations:** stretching out the first sound of a word, with difficulty to move to the next sound. Ex. (“sssssssssee that dog?”)

B. **Secondary Behaviors:** secondary responses to the disfluencies, people who stutter make as they try to get through, avoid or escape a disfluent moment.

- **Physical Movements:** eye blinking, opening jaw, pursing lips, head jerking, fist clenching, feet tapping, etc.
- **Escape & Avoidance Behaviors:**
  - Inserting ‘starter’ words: “uh” – “um,” right before a stuttering moment.
  - Vocal Abnormalities: speaking rapidly, in a monotone voice, and/or using rising pitch.
  - Circumlocution: might describe/talk about the desired word.
  - Substitution: replaces a difficult word with an easier one.

C. **Feelings and Attitudes:** people who suffer negative feelings and emotions as a result of their inability to say what they want to say in the way they want to say it.

- Worry, Anxiety, Frustration, Embarrassment

-Stuttering Awareness 2016

## What is Stuttering?

Stuttering (i.e. disfluency) is a communication disorder in which fluent speech is disrupted.

*When do I need to seek the guidance of a Licensed Speech Language Pathologist?*

- If stuttering symptoms persist beyond the age of 4 ½ - 5-years and has lasted longer than 6-12 months.
- If your child stutters on more than 10% of his speech, stutters with considerable effort and tension, or avoids stuttering by changing words and using extra sounds to get started.
- Complete blocks of speech are more common than repetitions or prolongations now, and disfluencies tend to be present in most speaking situations. (see symptoms).



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## 7 Tips for talking with a child who stutters:

1. **Reduce the pace.** Speak with your child in an unhurried way, pausing frequently. Wait a few seconds after your child finishes before you begin to speak. Your own easy relaxed speech will be far more effective.
2. **Full listening.** Try to increase those times that you give your child your undivided attention and are really listening.
3. **Asking questions.** Try to resist asking one after the other. Sometimes it is more helpful to comment on what your child has said and wait.
4. **Turn taking.** Help all members of the family take turns talking and listening.
5. **Building confidence.** Use descriptive praise to build confidence. An example would be "I like the way you picked up your toys. You're so helpful," instead of "that's great."
6. **Special times.** Set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day when you can give your undivided attention to your child. This quiet calm time – no TV, iPad or phones – can be a confidence builder for young children. As little as five minutes a day can make a difference.
7. **Normal rules apply.** Discipline the child who stutters just as you do your other children and just as you would if he didn't stutter.

*-The Stuttering Foundation*



*"The exact cause of stuttering is still unknown, but it is undoubtedly multifactorial".*

*-Stuttering Awareness 2016*

### Resources:

The Stuttering Foundation of America provides free online resources & support.

- o [www.stutteringhelp.org](http://www.stutteringhelp.org)

The American Institute for Stuttering is a nonprofit organization in the USA that offers help and support.

- o [www.stutteringtreatment.org](http://www.stutteringtreatment.org)

Say: The Stuttering Association for the Young empowers young people who stutter (8-18 years) and helps improve their confidence and communication skills.

- o [www.say.org](http://www.say.org)

Friends: The National Association of Young PWS a non-profit organization that provides support and education.

- o [www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org)

The National Stuttering Association offers friendly support and information through a variety of services.

- o [www.westutter.org](http://www.westutter.org)

The Stuttering Homepage provides information about therapy, support, organizations, and materials for kids who stutter.

- o [www.stutteringhomepage.com](http://www.stutteringhomepage.com)

Stuttering is Cool is a podcast with a mission to encourage people who stutter & not let it hold them back.

- o [www.stutteringiscool.com](http://www.stutteringiscool.com)

Stutter Talk is a non-profit podcast supporting those who stutter and their families.

- o [www.stuttertalk.com](http://www.stuttertalk.com)

### What are the risk factors for Chronic Stuttering?

- **Family History of Stuttering:** Presence of a family history of persistent stuttering places the child at a higher risk of chronic stuttering.
- **Age of Onset:** Children who stutter after 3 ½ have a lesser chance of spontaneous recovery.
- **Gender:** Boys are at higher risk for chronic stuttering than girls. (3 to 4 times more)
- **Time Post Onset:** Child is less likely to outgrow his stuttering on his own if he continues to stutter for more than 6-12 months.
- **Concomitant Speech-Language Problems:** Children with speech or language developmental disorders (ADHD, learning disabilities) are at higher risk of stuttering.
- **Prolongation Behaviors:** Presence of persistent prolongation behaviors in child speech is a warning sign of chronic stuttering.
- **Increased Negative Awareness:** Child's awareness and concerns about his speech difficulties are the underlying factors behind the development of chronic stuttering.
- **High Parental Expectations:** High parental expectations for the child's performance (academic, verbal, athletic, etc.) add pressure on the child and worsen stuttering.

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