

Ways to help your child speak smoothly



Here are some tips to help your child speak more fluently (smoothly). They should help your child's disfluencies (stuttering).

Take the pressure off

- Make comments about what your child is doing or saying instead of asking too many questions.
- Talk about what is going on now. It is harder to think about what happened yesterday or what will happen in the future.
- Avoid:
 - Asking your child to speak when they are tired or upset.
 - Forcing your child to speak with others. (For example: “Tell Daddy what you did in school today.”) Talk about these things yourself. If your child wants to add anything, then they can do so without the pressure to talk.
 - Pressuring your child if their stuttering gets worse. It is common for stuttering to get worse as children learn new words and other language skills. Try spending less time teaching words like numbers or colors. Instead, have your child do things like crafts that let them be active without having to speak all the time.

Be a role model

- Talk slowly to your child and pause often. Your child will copy you if you talk slowly.
- Use short, simple sentences and simple words.
- Name some of the pictures or talk about what is going on in them when you look at picture books. Avoid quizzing your child about the pictures. (For example: “What is this? Do dogs have tails?”). If your child wants to say anything about the pictures, they will. This makes it less stressful and easier for your child to talk.
- Use slow, easy body movements when you interact with your child.

Spend some special time

- Set aside some quiet time during your child's day. Give your child time to answer your questions and think about what they want to say.
- Listen to your child. Show you are interested with facial expressions and body language.
- Your child's stuttering may increase when they want your attention. Most children do not like waiting their turn and may interrupt you. If you cannot give your child all of your attention, tell them to wait a minute. Then, give your child your full attention as soon as you can.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Ways to help your child speak smoothly, continued

Take turns

- Teach your child to take turns. When you finish a sentence, pause to let your child have a turn. Make rules for turn-taking at meals and other times. Let your child know it is not polite to interrupt others.
- Have the whole family take turns talking and listening.
- Wait a few seconds to talk after your child talks. This lets your child know they have plenty of time to say what they want.

Therapist

Date

Phone number

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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