

# Treatment for pre-school and school age stuttering

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Your child may need treatment for his stuttering. Whether your child needs this type of help depends on:

- The type of stuttering.
- How often they stutter.
- How long they have been stuttering.

Most often, a speech-language pathologist (SLP) needs to see a child if they stutter on 5 to 7 percent of words, avoid talking, and “break up” or repeat words when talking.

Helping children improve their speech takes time, patience and practice. For some children, this may take only a few weeks, but most children need treatment for several months. The earlier your child begins treatment, the better their chances of speaking normally.

Your child’s SLP may try to help your child by:

- **Having your child speak more slowly.** If your child speaks too quickly, they are more likely to stutter. Your child’s SLP can teach your child to speak more slowly and easily.
- **Teaching your child to speak in a quiet, easy voice.** Your child will be less likely to stutter when they use a quieter or softer voice. Your child’s SLP may teach your child to first speak very quietly and then to speak more loudly over time as your child’s stuttering gets better.
- **Teaching your child to ease into speaking.** Many children stutter on the first word of a sentence. Your child will learn to ease into their words rather than “pushing” the words out. Stuttering most often gets better as your child learns to say the first words of sentences gently.
- **Helping your child relax breathing and muscles.** Your child’s stuttering can worsen if they have irregular (“choppy”) breathing patterns or tenses the throat and muscles that are used for talking. Your child’s SLP can teach your child what “tight” and “relaxed” muscles feel like and help them speak with relaxed muscles.
- **Helping your child talk fluently (smoothly) and increasing their speech to do well with harder tasks.** First, a child needs to learn how to talk fluently (without stuttering) with single words. As your child’s speech improves, the SLP will help them use these words slowly in sentences and simple conversation. This will help your child speak in sentences.

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

## Treatment for pre-school and school-age stuttering, continued

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- **Helping your child understand the problem.** Your child may not learn and develop clear speech patterns if they do not understand what must change. The SLP can help your child understand “easy” and “rough” talking by repeating your child’s disfluency (stuttering) and by asking your child, “Was that your easy or rough talking voice?” This will help your child to be aware of the speech problem and make them want to work to change it.
- **Helping you be involved in your child’s therapy.** The best way for your child to improve their speech patterns is to practice at home. Your child’s SLP can help you and your child plan what you will practice. The SLP may ask you to come to your child’s sessions sometimes. This will help you do the right things at home to help your child.
- **Helping you and your child with school issues.** The SLP can help your child’s teachers deal with feelings and teasing about stuttering. The SLP can also listen to your child, talk with them about his feelings, and help provide some answers to their concerns.

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Therapist	Date	Time
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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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