

STUTTERING

Fluency disorders (stuttering) - With this type of problem, the child has difficulty with the flow or rhythm of speech. The smooth flow of speech can be interrupted in a number of ways: repeating sounds, syllables, words and phrases, prolonging sounds, or using interjections such as "um."

My Child is Stuttering. What should I do?

Children who are still learning to talk often go through a period (somewhere between the ages of 2-5) of what is called normal disfluency. These behaviors are characterized by repetitions of whole phrases or words, as in "I like, I like, I like ice cream," or "My, my new cat is nice." Be aware that this is a normal part of your child's speech development. Act in ways that promote easy smooth speech. Children are great imitators and often will copy you. Speak more slowly; listen to what is said, not how it is said; communicate well by pausing when you talk to give your child a chance to talk and letting him finish his own sentences; and show attention by nodding occasionally and looking interested in what he is saying.

Signs that your child's stuttering may be becoming more of a concern include:

- Repeating sounds and syllables three times or more, as in "The ha-ba-ba-baby is happy"
- Using a higher pitched or louder voice when prolonging a sound
- Drawing out or prolonging a sound for more than one second, such as saying "ssssssssssssssssssoup"
- Showing signs of impatience or fear when stuttering or avoiding talking altogether
- Using "escape" behaviors such as nodding or blinking to break out of stuttering
- Tensing up and hurrying through repetitions
- Blocking the airflow or interrupting the voice during speech