

Stuttering Tips for Parents

- **Be a good listener**
 - Allow your child to complete their sentences without rushing them or interrupting them. Wait patiently until your child is finished talking.
 - Look at your child, maintain natural eye contact, and give them your full attention when speaking. Get down to their eye level if possible.
- **Add Pause time between speakers**
 - After your child speaks to you, wait a few seconds before you respond.
 - Adding pauses will allow your child a natural opportunity to enter a conversation and will help them feel that they don't have to rush when they talk.
 - Try not to ask multiple questions in a row. Give your child a chance to respond to each question you ask.
- **Repeat your child's message**
 - Occasionally repeat what your child says (in your own words) after they are finished speaking. This shows that you were listening to their message and that you understood them.
- **Increase turn-taking**
 - Listen without interrupting and reduce competition between children for talk time.
 - Set clear rules for good communication for all children (e.g., one person talks at a time, listen patiently to others).
 - Model these rules yourself and praise children for following them.
 - At dinner time, use a "talking rock". The person with the rock is the only one who is allowed to speak.
- **Make reassuring comments:**
 - Talk to children about stuttering in a matter-of-fact, supportive way, to help them understand what is happening when they stutter. If your child seems to be frustrated by their difficulty in speaking, make neutral, reassuring comments. For instance, you could say "*that was a tricky word*", "*sometimes I have bumpy words too*", "*don't worry, you can try to tell me later*" or "*It's okay. I'm listening*".
 - You can use terms such as "bumpy speech" or "getting stuck" to describe what is happening. Avoid labeling a young child as "stutterer".

Responses that 'do not' help'

- DO NOT ...tell your child to "slow down" or "relax".
- DO NOT... tell your child to "*take a deep breath and try it again*" or "*think about what you want to say first*".
- DO NOT ...finish your child's sentences for them.
- DO NOT ...criticize their speech.
- DO NOT... look distressed when your child stutters.
- DO NOT... ask your child to use "display speech" (e.g., "Tell your aunts and uncles all about your trip"). Let your child talk about what they want to.

Getting help

- It is recommended that you get your child assessed by a speech–language pathologist, so that they can evaluate the nature and severity of your child's speech disruptions (dysfluencies). Even if therapy is not recommended at that time, most children will be monitored for a short while to make sure the dysfluency is not getting worse.
- Effective treatments for stuttering are available. The majority of children who stutter can improve their speech.
- There may be a wait for services with our program.
- If you wish to obtain a private assessment or therapy, you can receive a list of private practitioners from the Ontario Speech, Language, and Hearing Association at 416-920-0361 or at the website www.osla.on.ca under Find a Practitioner.