



If You Think Your Child Stutters

Between the ages of two and six, many children will begin to repeat sounds, syllables, and whole words when they are speaking. This is often not actually stuttering but rather normal, non-fluent duplications of speech. As children's language begins to develop and become more adult-like, their mouths may have trouble "keeping up" with their brains. The amount and type of repetition (sounds, syllables, or whole words) will vary from child to child and from one situation to another. It may last for several weeks to several months. It may disappear for a time and then re-appear later. For most children, eventually it will disappear altogether. Patient acceptance of your child's speech at this time is most important.

You can help your child during this time by.....

- ❖ Not calling attention to your child's repetitions verbally or through your behavior (facial expressions, body language).
- ❖ Not telling your child to "slow down" or "take it easy." Instead, try modeling slow, clear speech as you talk to your child.
- ❖ Trying to help your child relieve any tension or stress in her life. Although stress is not the cause, it can sometimes lead to more repetitions in her speech.
- ❖ Giving your child plenty of time to talk without being interrupted (by outside events, yourself, or siblings). It

may help to set aside a few minutes each day that are designated as time for just you and your child when he knows that he has your full attention. It is also helpful to talk with all members of your family about taking turns while having a conversation so that other family members do not interrupt your child.

- ❖ Reducing the number of questions that you ask your child. This allows her to speak more freely about what she wants to talk about. Responding to her with statements lets her know that you heard her.
- ❖ Trying not to be impatient or embarrassed by his speech.
- ❖ Not asking your child to “perform” speaking tasks when she is not comfortable doing so (counting, ABC’s, etc).
- ❖ Understanding that children are still developing their skills, including speech and language.
- ❖ Remembering that hesitations and repetitions are usually perfectly natural in a child’s early speech and may continue for some time.
- ❖ Being sure your child knows he is loved and accepted exactly as he is.

For more information about stuttering, visit these websites....

- www.stutteringhelp.org
- www.nsastutter.org
- www.stutteringcenter.org

