



HOW TO HELP A CHILD WHO STUTTERS

What to do if your child stutters:

- Focus on **what** your child says instead of **how** he says it.
- Listen patiently. Give your child a chance to talk freely and to finish his own thoughts.
- Don't say "slow down" or "relax" to your child as this may cause more anxiety.
- Speak slowly and at your child's language level.
- When talking or telling a story, wait up to 10 seconds to give your child a chance to talk. This shows your child that there is no rush.
- To keep the conversation going, use comments (e.g. "It sounds like you really liked going to the farm.") or simple questions (e.g. "Did you like going to the farm?"). Open-ended or complex questions can trigger more hesitations (e.g. avoid questions like "What did you like about going to the farm?").
- Help children take turns - this is important when siblings compete for talk time.
- Make talking a pleasant experience for your child. Spend time every day playing games, talking about pictures or telling stories. Turn off the radio and television so that your child doesn't have to deal with other distractions.
- Remember: easy casual hesitations (I, I, I go to grandma's...) are normal for a young child and should not be called "stuttering". Watch for any tension or struggle that is seen in true stuttering.

DID YOU KNOW?

- About 5% of children stutter.
- More boys stutter than girls.
- Stuttering runs in families and is not due to anxiety.
- Stuttering may be worse when a child is tired, sick or excited.
- Most children respond well to therapy.

IS STUTTERING NORMAL?

- When children learn to talk, they go through a "normal" phase of repeating words and sounds between age 2-5; also called "dysfluency".
- This can last a few days, weeks or up to six months.
- Some children may not outgrow this phase and may have a true stuttering problem.
- If it lasts 6 months or is getting worse, get help!

For more information visit www.onekidsplace.ca