

# Talking Matters

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*Helping your child to reach their potential*



## Preschool stuttering: How can I help?

*Therapy with a speech pathologist is effective in treating stuttering in young children and is recommended for any child who has stuttered for three to six months or more. Here are some ideas for parents, carers and teachers to encourage smoother speech in young children who stutter and to support their therapy program.*

### **What can you do?**

1. Try not to show you are anxious about your child's speech.
2. Slow down your own speech. Try to model a slow easy rate of speech to your child. Your child may be rushing to keep up with your speaking rate.
3. Give your child plenty of time to talk and let them know you will listen. Pause to give your child a little 'breathing time' after they finish a sentence. Let them finish what they want to say.
4. Acknowledge what your child says rather than how they say it.
5. Always look at your child when they are talking.
6. Asking your child to "slow down", "take your time" or "think about what you want to say first" can be helpful. Try not to nag your child though as they may become tense and struggle more to get words out.
7. Notice situations when your child's speech is bumpier (more stutters) and times when it is usually smooth? If speech is very bumpy suggest an activity you know will make them more likely to speak smoothly.
8. Try to relieve tensions in the home. Set up family rules for turn taking at meals and other family gatherings. Give everyone a chance to speak without interruption.
9. Set aside a special time each day to be alone with your child, for example, go for a walk or read a story.



### **How can this help?**

- These ideas can reduce the pressure on your child to speak. It allows your child to know that they have your attention.
- By giving your child cues about how to reduce the amount of stuttering, you're letting them know that you are there to help them, not make them feel embarrassed about their speech.
- By spending quality time listening to your child, you can make them feel more confident about themselves.

**If you haven't already done so, consider a referral to your local Speech Pathologist**