

Preschool Stuttering



In their preschool years many children go through periods of stuttering, especially when they are tired, excited, or upset. These periods may come and go, and most children grow out of them. Here are some suggestions for helping your child get through these periods:

Speak slowly: *Slowing your own speech down will slow down your child's speech much more effectively than telling them to slow down.*

Give your child lots of time to finish what they are saying: *Try not to interrupt or finish sentences for them.*

Do not call extra attention to your child's speech: *You don't want your child to start trying to not stutter. This can make their speech worse, because they will be thinking too hard about how they are talking instead of what they want to say.*

Make sure your child gets a turn to talk: *At the dinner table or in a noisy group of children, give everyone a turn to talk. Keep the conversation at a slow pace.*

Some children will not grow out of their stuttering. For them, it is important to begin intervention as early as possible. Here are some signs that you should take your child to a speech-language pathologist:

Your child's repetitions are parts of words or single sounds. Repetitions of whole words or "um" and "uh" are much more common.

Your child's speech is accompanied by signs of tension or struggling, such as clenching fists, blinking eyes, or visible tensing in the mouth or neck.

Your child's speech seems to get blocked completely sometimes, with their mouth open, and efforts to make a sound, but no sound coming out.

Request an assessment if you are not sure about your child's stuttering. Even if treatment isn't necessary, the speech-language pathologist will be able to analyze your child's speech and answer your questions.

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