



The Stuttering Clinic at National Speech / Language Therapy Center

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Helpful Strategies for Communicating with your Child who Stutters

The following are tips to enhance your child's fluency, promote healthy communication attitudes and enjoyment for speaking:

- ❖ Reduce the overall pace of your interaction with your child. Do this by slowing your rate of speech and adding pauses within your sentences at natural breaks within a sentence, between your sentences and after your child finishes their thought.
- ❖ Follow your child's lead in play in order to match the pace of their interaction, reduce language demands and promote creativity and development of problem-solving skills.
- ❖ Balance how often you ask your child questions (ex. What did you eat for lunch?) with comments (ex. "I ate a turkey sandwich.") to reduce the demands of rapid-fire questioning. You can also use indirect requests such as "I wonder" Or "I think" to initiate a conversation.
- ❖ Identify how many words your child typically strings together and speak at a level that is at or slightly above their level. This will model the length and complexity of sentences where your child can be most successful.
- ❖ Keep eye contact when your child is speaking and repeat/rephrase both fluent and disfluent speech to show that you are listening and provide a strong language model.
- ❖ Help your family members take turns talking to reduce interruptions and prevent them from completing each other's sentences.
- ❖ Speak openly about stuttering, just as you would speak about other challenges your child may face. Acknowledge difficult speaking moments, validate your child's feelings about their speech and praise them for successfully communicating a message, whether or not they are fluent.
- ❖ Build your child's self-esteem by commenting on the "good stuff" and providing a word to describe their behavior. An example may be "I noticed you put all the toys back into the container and put it back on the shelf. That's what I call helpful!"