



# National Speech/Language Therapy Center

DBA: National Therapy Center, Inc.

**The Stuttering Clinic**

## National Stuttering Awareness Q & A Week 2018

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Tuesday's Question: I've noticed an increase in my child's stuttering. Why the change and what can I do to help?

Response: Parents often feel concerned and frustrated when they see a sudden increase in stuttering. The first and most important thing to understand is that stuttering is, by nature, a variable disorder. That being said, there are some factors that can contribute to an increase in the frequency or severity of stuttering. **Reminder – these things do not cause stuttering, but may contribute to the changes you are seeing.**

Some factors and examples include:

- Life changes – moving schools, getting a new sibling, or losing a family member
- Personal changes – being sick, not getting enough sleep, being excited, or increased self-awareness/self-consciousness
- Changes in routine – going on vacation, or having guests visit

Of course, you often cannot control these factors listed, nor would we recommend trying to! However, there are some things you can do:

1. When big life changes are on the horizon, help prepare your child by talking to Him/her prior to the changes occurring.
2. Try to maintain daily routines as best you can.
3. Prepare yourself- know that an increase in stuttering is likely when these events occur and it is not your fault or your child's!
4. Talk openly about stuttering. Practice openness in the following ways:
  - A. Acknowledge stuttering moments and praise for how your child responds (e.g. that word got bumpy and you stuck with it- that makes me proud!")
  - B. Validate his/her feelings (e.g. if the child is upset, saying, "I can see you're frustrated when your words get stuck")
5. Monitor for teasing/bullying with the support of teachers or others that spend a lot of time with your child.

If your child is showing negative reactions to the increase in stuttering, and/or you notice an increase in physical tension, it is recommended you contact your speech/language pathologist, who can provide more specific ways to support your child.

Stuttering may be variable, but the best constant for a child who stutters is the loving support of his/her family.

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