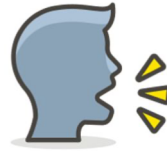




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STUTTERING



Stuttering is a communication disorder involving interruptions in the smooth flow of speech, or “disfluencies”. When you listen to the speech of those around you, you’ll notice that all people are disfluent at times.

They may hesitate when speaking, use a filler word (“like” or “uh”), or repeat a word or phrase. In general, the difference between their speech and the speech of a child who stutters is the number and type of disfluencies and the amount of tension associated with the moment of stuttering.

Current research suggests that stuttering is caused by a combination of factors, including genetics, language development, environment, and brain structure and function. Some studies show that people who stutter show differences in the way the brain’s messages interact with the muscles and body parts needed for speaking. Although the disruptions in speech are sometimes triggered by emotional or environmental factors, stuttering is essentially neurological and physiological-not psychological, in nature (National Stuttering Association). Stuttering can run in families due to genetic factors.

People who stutter may experience repetitions of sounds (s-s-s-some), repetitions of syllables (do-do-dog), prolongations or stretching of sounds (whe-----re is it?), or blocks (a noticeable stoppage of airflow or sound), or can experience some combination of all of these disfluencies.

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILD WHO STUTTERS:

Most children who stutter benefit from taking the time to speak at a rate that promotes fluency. There are several ways that you and the other adults around your child can help promote their fluency:

Slow your rate. Speak with your child in an easy relaxed way, pausing frequently. Wait a few seconds after your child finishes before you begin to speak. Modeling speech this way is much more effective than telling your child to “slow down” or “take your time”.

Active listening. Try to increase those times that you give your child your undivided attention and are fully listening.

Reduce questions. It is natural to ask your child questions, but resist asking one after the other. Instead, you might comment on what your child has said and wait for their response.

Turn taking. Help all members of the family take turns talking and listening. Children find it much easier to talk when there are fewer interruptions.

Don't finish his/her sentences. Wait patiently for your child to finish. Don't rush a child who stutters. Provide adequate wait time for him/her to complete the thought.

Create special times. Set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day when you can give your undivided attention to your child. A quiet calm time – no TV, iPad or phones - with positive feedback and reinforcement can help build their confidence.

Be patient. Try not to be upset or annoyed when stuttering increases. Your child is doing his best. Showing patience and acceptance will help your child reduce their fear of stuttering.

Talk to your child about stuttering. If your child exhibits awareness of difficulties with speaking, it is important not to ignore it. Talking openly with your child about stuttering may help prevent them from developing negative reactions to speaking.

Acknowledge your child's feelings. If your child is frustrated or upset at times when his stuttering is worse, reassure him. Some children respond well to hearing, "Sometimes talking is hard, but lots of people get stuck on words...it's okay." or "I'm glad that you talk to me even when it's hard because I really like hearing what you have to say."

If stuttering persists more than six months, your child stutters on more than 10% of his speech, stutters with a great deal of effort and tension, has facial or body movements along with stuttering, or avoids stuttering by changing words or using extra sounds to get started, he/she should see a speech-language pathologist.

There is presently no treatment that will make stuttering completely disappear. However, children who stutter can obtain greater control over their speech, speak more fluently, feel better about themselves and their speech, and communicate more easily and successfully.

If you have questions, contact the team of Speech-Language Pathologists at Wee Speech, P.C.