



Speech-Language Pathology

www.connecticutchildrens.org

860.837.5915 phone 860.837.6379 fax

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Stuttering in the Young Child

Developmental Disfluencies

Stuttering is common in young children. It is often a part of your child's development. As a child gains language quickly, he may have a hard time saying all of the words that he has just learned. Here are some behaviors that may indicate that the stuttering is developmental.

- *The stuttering lasts for less than 6 months*
- *Your child stutters mostly at the beginning of the sentence*
- *The stutters are mostly repetitions of a whole word*
- *The stuttering stops on its own without therapy.*

Non-Developmental Disfluencies

Sometimes your child does not "grow-out" of the disfluencies. Therapy is needed to help your child overcome the disfluent speech. Some of the risk factors for this occurring include:

- *Stuttering has lasted longer than 6 months*
- *Your child starts to avoid words and talking*
- *The stuttering occurs in the middle of words and sentences*
- *Your child starts to have other movements associated with the stuttering. These include eye blinks, head movements, and arm movements*

Things To Do At Home To Help

- *Talk in a slow unrushed manner at home. This models a calm and easy way of speaking.*
- *Pause about one second after your child stops speaking. Then respond. This gives your child plenty of time to speak without someone jumping in too soon.*
- *Focus on what your child says rather than commenting on how it is said. It's okay to notice that your child is having a hard time with "bumpy" speech and encourage your child to keep trying.*
- *Remember all communication is good whether it is smooth or bumpy, they are just different manners of saying words.*
- *Encourage all family members to listen to each other and not interrupt. This will insure that your child has enough time to start a thought before someone else.*

What To Expect From Speech Therapy

Speech therapy is different for each child. There are some key parts to therapy that need to be remembered:

- *All communication is good. Bumpy speech is just as good as smooth speech.*
- *Your participation in the therapy is very important to your child's success with smooth speech.*
- *Talking about stuttering in front of your child is okay.*
- *You should answer any questions that your child might have about therapy directly and honestly.*