

# Delays & Disorders Explained -Dysfluency/Stuttering -



## A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

### WHAT IS DYSFLUENCY/STUTTERING?

Dysfluency, commonly known as stuttering, is a speech disorder that affects the flow and “smoothness” of speech.

It can be frustrating and challenging, both for individuals who experience it and for their parents or loved ones.

### WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS?

For parents, it is important to understand that stuttering can manifest differently in each person.

Common signs of stuttering in children include:

- Frequent repetitions of sounds or words (e.g., "b-b-b-ball").
- Prolonged sounds (e.g., "sssssnake").
- Hesitations or blocks in speech.
- Tension in facial muscles and/or secondary (tapping along, squinting eyes, slapping their arm)
- Struggling to get words out, which can be emotionally distressing.

*In pre-school children, stuttering onset can be associated with word finding or language delays and may be transitory and short-lived.*

### WHAT DOES THERAPY FOR DYSFLUENCY/STUTTERING INVOLVE?

Speech therapy is a highly effective solution for managing stuttering. Strategies for smoothness and flow of speech can reduce the severity of stuttering. Speech-Language Pathologists work with individuals to improve their speech fluency. Therapy often involves:

- Teaching techniques to reduce stuttering, such as slowing down speech.
- Using gentle onset of sounds.
- Practicing relaxation exercises.
- Changing patterns and habits.

### WHAT CAN BE PRACTICED AT HOME?

Stuttering can be a source of frustration and self-consciousness for children. This can result in anxiety about speaking or avoiding situations where they might have to talk. It's crucial for parents to provide emotional support and create a safe and accepting environment without drawing further attention or shame to “bumpy” speech patterns.

Parents can play a significant role in helping their child manage stuttering by practicing therapy techniques at home and providing positive reinforcement. It is important to be patient, as progress may take time.

*Early intervention is essential, as it increases the likelihood of successful stuttering management. Parents should seek professional evaluation and therapy if they notice persistent stuttering in their child. Most individuals who receive appropriate therapy and support can learn to manage their stuttering effectively and lead fulfilling lives with clear and fluent speech. Remember, stuttering does not define a person, and with the right help, individuals can develop confidence and effective communication skills.*