



**1SpecialPlace**<sup>TM</sup>  
THE SPEECH EXPERT

# "WH" OF CHILDHOOD STUTTERING

Information handouts curated by our top experts

## WHAT IS STUTTERING?

- We all have times when we do not speak smoothly. We may add "uh" or "you know" to what we say.
- People who stutter may repeat parts of words (**repetitions**), stretch a sound out for a long time (**prolongations**), or have a hard time getting a word out (**blocks**).
- Stuttering also may include tension and negative feelings about talking.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

1. When children are learning new words or speech sounds, you may notice some of these typical speech errors. This is normal.
2. Stuttering usually starts between 2 and 6 years of age.



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## WHAT ARE THE RED FLAGS THAT I SHOULD LOOK FOR?

- Many children go through normal periods of speech errors lasting less than 6 months.
- Stuttering lasting longer than this may need treatment.

The following types of errors happen when someone stutters:

- Part-word repetitions – "I **w-w-w**-want some milk."
- One-syllable word repetitions – "**Go-go-go** there."
- Prolonged sounds – "**Sssssss**sue is nice."
- Blocks or stops – "I want a **(pause)** biscuit."
- You may also notice other behaviours like head nodding or eye blinking often while the person is stammering.

## WHAT CAUSES STUTTERING?

- There is no documented cause for Stuttering.
- However, research has established a strong connection of family genes and brain differences in persons with Stuttering.



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## WHO CAN DIAGNOSE STUTTERING?

- A qualified Speech-Language Therapist can diagnose and provide intervention for children and adults with stuttering.



## WHEN SHOULD I SEE A SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST?

- If you suspect your child to have Stuttering, seek help as soon as possible from a certified Speech-Language Therapist.
- If any of the below criteria are met, get assessed by an SLP:
  - Your child's stuttering has lasted for 6 months or more.
  - Your child starts to stutter more often.
  - Your child tenses up or struggles when talking.
  - Your child avoids talking or says it is too hard to talk.
  - There is a family history of stuttering.



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## MY CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH STUTTERING, NOW WHAT?



- A Speech-Language Therapist is a professional who specializes in identifying and providing intervention for individuals with communication disorders.
- Most children with stammering gain benefit from Speech Therapy.
- Speech Therapy will focus on two main aspects of communication:
- To improve self confidence in one's communication
- To reduce the moments of stammering/stuttering

## WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME TO SUPPORT?

- Maintain a calm and motivating environment at home
- Do not criticize your child's way of speaking
- Maintain constant eye contact with your child during speaking
- Minimize interruptions while your child is trying to say something
- Let your child finish his/her statements, do not finish it for him/her



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