



american institute for stuttering

General Guidelines for Parents/Caregivers of Young Children who Stutter

Parents do not cause stuttering, yet they can be part of the solution. In fact, they are probably already doing some things that help their child speak more easily. Some areas parents **may** work on in therapy sessions that could help their child speak more easily and fluently include:

- **Minimizing time pressures**

Parents/caregivers could use more pauses in their speech at appropriate/natural places along with pausing for a moment before responding to their child. Using an unhurried, gentle, yet natural rate can help to set a more relaxed pace. This will allow your child more time to plan what he is trying to say along with coordinating the many quick muscle movements involved in speaking.

- **Balance questions and comments**

Allow your child plenty of time to respond to your questions. Become aware of the amount of questions posed to your child during your interactions with them. Try commenting on an activity yourself instead of probing with questions. Allow your child to lead the conversation and to lead during play.

- **Repeat and rephrase**

Repeat and rephrase easily and at a slightly slower rate **both** fluent and disfluent speech to provide a good model. Do this from time to time, not constantly. This lets your child know that you are listening and provides a good model of smooth talking, proper articulation, and grammar.

- **Being a good listener**

Maintain good eye contact with your child while listening to what they are saying versus how they are saying it. Allow your child time to finish what they are saying without interruptions. Other family members who do not stutter should be treated the same.

- **Lifestyle changes to be considered**

Plan plenty of time in order to provide your child with a comfortable pace to his/her day. Try not to overfill your child's schedule with too many activities. Allow for some one-to-one quality time daily where your child has your undivided attention. A brief regular time with each child in the family may be helpful.

- **Acceptance**

Responding to stuttering with acceptance, love, and ease is imperative. Children's self-esteem and self-acceptance are affected directly by their caregivers and those around them.