

7 tips for talking with your child

Experts agree that most children who stutter benefit from taking time to speak at a rate that promotes fluency. These guidelines represent a number of ways that adults can help.

1 Reduce the pace. Speak with your child in an unhurried way, pausing frequently. Wait a few seconds after your child finishes before you begin to speak. Your own easy relaxed speech will be far more effective than any advice such as “slow down” or “try it again slowly.” For some children, it is also helpful to introduce a more relaxed pace of life for awhile.



2 Full listening. Try to increase those times that you give your child your undivided attention and are really listening. This does not mean dropping everything every time she speaks.

3 Asking questions. Asking questions is a normal part of life – but try to resist asking one after the other. Sometimes it is more helpful to comment on what your child has said and wait.

4 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.

5 Building confidence. Use descriptive praise to build confidence. An example would be “I like the way you picked up your toys. You’re so helpful,” instead of “That’s great.” Praise strengths unrelated to talking as well, such as athletic skills, being organized, independent, or careful.

6 Special times. Set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day when you can give your undivided attention to your child. This quiet, calm time — no TV, iPad or phones — can be a confidence builder for young children. As little as five minutes a day can make a difference.

7 Normal rules apply. Discipline the child who stutters just as you do your other children and just as you would if he didn’t stutter.