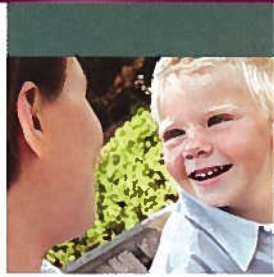


## What is stuttering?

Stuttering is a break in the flow of speech. It's also called "disfluency" or "stammering." There are different ways that people stutter:



- Stops or blocks (no sound comes out)
- Repetitions ("Wh-wh-wh-where are you going?")
- Prolongations of sounds ("SSSSSSsave me a seat") and syllables ("I'm le-le-leaving now")

People who stutter also may have extra movements in their mouth, face, and body. This usually happens when they try hard to get words out.

Everyone stutters sometimes. This can include using "uh" or saying a sound or word more than once.

## What causes stuttering?

People may stutter for different reasons. We don't always know the cause.

Many times, children stutter when they are learning to talk. This typically happens when a child is 2 years old to 5 years old. Some children may start stuttering in elementary school, or even later on. Possible causes of stuttering are:

- Family history
- Differences in brain development
- Stress or pressure to talk

Emotional problems do not cause stuttering. But dealing with stuttering can be hard.

## What should you do if your child is stuttering?

Many children go through a time when they stutter. Most children stop stuttering after a short period of time. A sign that stuttering may continue is that talking takes a lot of effort.

Other signs are if your child:

- stutters a lot
- uses more stops or prolongations rather than easy word repetitions
- gets upset when talking
- has unusual face or body movements

Your child can get help from a speech-language pathologist, or SLP for short. And the earlier, the better. SLPs don't "cure" stuttering. But there are many ways that SLPs can help your child talk more fluently. No one way is best.

## What should you do when someone stutters?

When you are talking to someone who stutters:

- Don't look away.
- Give the person time to talk.
- Listen. Do not finish the person's sentences.
- Do not call attention to the stuttering. Don't say, "Think before you talk" or "Talk slower."

Children may not know that they are stuttering. If they do, and they look upset, it's okay to say, "That was hard to say," or "Sometimes people have trouble talking."