

Stuttering

What is stuttering?

According to the [American Speech Language Hearing Association](#) (ASHA), stuttering is the disruptions in the production of speech sounds, also referred to as disfluencies. These disruptions occur frequently with obvious tension and frustration.

What are some examples of disfluencies?

Repetitions

- Part word: "W- W- W- Where are you going?"
- Whole word: "This- This- This is mine."

Prolongations

- Prolongations occur when a person continues to say a sound until he or she is able to complete the word.
- Example: "SSSSSSit next to me."

Blocks

- Blocks occur when the mouth is ready to say the sound but no sound comes out. The sound may suddenly come out forcefully.
- Example: "Play with me."

Interjections

- Interjections are filler words that are used when a person has difficulty joining words together.
- Example: "I - *um* you know *um* - like to go fishing."

My child has disfluencies. Should I be concerned?

Most children have a period of disfluency during normal language development. This period typically lasts six months or less. Disfluencies may occur when the child is excited, trying to use long sentences, or in situations that are stressful. No tension or struggle is obvious and the child does not know that he/she is disfluent at this point. These disfluencies are common and are not a concern.

Disfluencies become a concern when a child is over the age of four and has had disfluent speech for longer than six months. The child may show signs of tension and effortful speech and may frequently repeat whole words and phrases. This may be evidence of stuttering. The child typically is not aware of his/her stuttering. Disfluencies are also a concern if there is a family history of stuttering. If these are things you see in your child, it may be best to contact a speech/language therapist. They can determine whether or not the child would benefit from

speech therapy to help reduce disfluencies.

What can I do to help my child who has disfluencies?

Talk in a calm, relaxed way

Let the child finish his/her thoughts; don't finish them for him/her

Try to reduce stressful situations where the child has to speak

Be patient

Avoid telling the child to stop and start over or slow down

Helpful Websites

- [The Stuttering Foundation](#)
- [The National Stuttering Association](#)
- [University of Mankato: Stuttering Home Page](#)
- [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)
- [The National Association for Young People Who Stutter](#)