

Stuttering

When most children learn to talk, they go through a normal “phase” in which they repeat words or phrases. This usually happens between the ages of two and five. This phase can last a few days or even weeks. Some children may not outgrow this phase and may in fact have a “true stuttering” problem.



How can a parent tell if their child is going through a normal “phase” or if it is “true stuttering?”

You can sometimes tell the difference between a normal “phase” and a “true stuttering” problem by looking at how often a child stutters and in what way. This may need to be done over a period of time. A Speech Language Pathologist can help to determine a stuttering problem. If you are worried that your child might be stuttering, call 519-272-8216 or 1-866-333-7716 and ask for smallTALK.

How can a parent with these concerns help their child?

- Be a good listener. Focus on **what** your child is saying, rather than **how** he/she is saying it.
- Try not to fill in words for your child. This may frustrate your child, especially if you have guessed the wrong word.
- Avoid telling your child to “slow down” or “take it easy”. This may make your child feel more anxious.
- Give your child plenty of time to talk without interruption.
- Encourage children to take turns talking, especially if brothers and sisters are competing for talk time.

**DON'T WAIT
EARLY HELP MAKES
A DIFFERENCE!**

Call 519-272-8216 or 1-866-333-7716
and ask for **smallTALK**

Visit our web site at www.smalltalkinfo.ca

Services provided by smallTALK are funded
by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Facts About “True Stuttering”

- About 5% of children stutter.
- Three to 4 times as many boys as girls stutter.
- Stuttering tends to run in families.
- Stuttering seems to be caused by a physical problem, not an emotional one.
- Stuttering may be worse when a child is tired, sick, anxious or excited.

Early help can make a difference. A Speech Language Pathologist can assist a child and his/her parents, teachers and others involved to understand and deal effectively with a stuttering problem.

Adapted with permission from material developed by First Words Preschool Speech and Language Program of Ottawa-Carleton led by Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services. Also adapted with permission from material developed by Toronto Preschool Speech and Language Services.

Parents, trust your instincts and call us if you

- have questions or concerns about the way your child's speech and language skills are developing
- want to refer your child for a speech and language assessment
- want more information on other topics related to speech and language development

