



FIVE TIPS FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS WHO STUTTER

1

Increase the length of pauses between speaking turns

Children might feel pressure to get their words out before somebody else begins talking. Allowing for slightly longer pauses between conversational turns can decrease this perceived time pressure.

2

Reduce your own rate of speech

It's common to hear parents and other adults tell children who stutter to "slow down." While well-meant, this statement could make children feel even more frustrated because stuttering just isn't that simple! However, it can help to model an unhurried manner of speaking.

3

Reduce the number of questions you ask in succession

When reading to or playing with your child, it's easy to slip into the role of "teacher" and inadvertently pepper them with questions to test their knowledge. An alternative interaction style involves using a more even balance of comments and questions. This reduces the demand for rapid, accurate responses from the child.

Rather than constant questioning, try making statements beginning with "I think" or "I wonder" as a conversational prompt. As another approach, make comments that might prompt your child to share details spontaneously. For example, instead of asking, "What did you eat for snack?" you can say, "I had an apple for my snack."

4

Follow the child's lead in play

Following your child's lead helps reduce the amount of verbal instructions and questioning during play. Allow the child to direct play and support them by using good eye contact and providing encouragement and praise to help boost confidence.

5

Decrease length and complexity of language

Children often imitate the grammar and vocabulary used by their parents. Reducing the complexity of your language—grammar, vocabulary, sentence length—when communicating with your child creates a less demanding speaking environment.