

## **Dysfluency**

Dysfluency, commonly known as “stuttering”, is a disturbance in the rhythm of speech. It can occur in different ways, including repeating entire words, syllables or sounds (e.g. c-c-c-ar), stretching a sound out (e.g. Mmmmonday), or getting stuck on a sound (e.g. c at).

It is quite common for children to experience a period of stuttering referred to as “normal non-fluency”. It often occurs around the time that they begin to use longer phrases as their thoughts get ahead of their words. Most children will not need intervention, as they will return to their fluent speaking patterns within 6 months to a year.

A child should be referred for speech therapy if:

- ❑ The stuttering persists for more than a year
- ❑ He/she is aware of or greatly frustrated by the stuttering
- ❑ It is becoming more constant day to day or more consistent from one situation to the next

The exact cause of stuttering is not known; however, current research suggests that it is caused by a complex interaction of biological, genetic and environmental factors. Furthermore, stuttering may result when certain factors in the environment combine to produce dysfluent speech in a person who is physiologically and/or genetically prone to it.

There is no “cure” for stuttering. People who stutter are taught strategies to be as fluent as possible and ways to cope with their dysfluencies. Early intervention is crucial, as the child’s chances for full recovery are much greater at an early age.

What you can do at home: Be patient and wait for your child to finish what he/she is saying while giving him/her your full attention. Model a slower rate of speech but do not ask your child to slow down.

For more information on dysfluency/stuttering, contact your school speech language pathologist and/or refer to the following websites: [caslpa.ca](http://caslpa.ca) (National Association) and [bcaslpa.bc.ca](http://bcaslpa.bc.ca) (Provincial Association).