

## What is stuttering?

People who stutter know what they want to say, but have trouble saying it because the flow of their speech is disrupted by: repetitions, prolongations, blocks, unusual pitch changes, and sometimes body movements (blinking, head or hand movements).

## What causes stuttering?

Although there has been much research and there are many theories of what causes stuttering, we can't definitively pinpoint what has caused someone's stutter. Stuttering is thought to be a physical disorder - and not caused by psychological factors. However, factors like anxiety, stress, or excitement, can make stuttering worse.

## How can stuttering effect your child?

Stuttering can interfere with a child's communication from a very young age. Some children can become frustrated at not being able to communicate effectively. Others may feel anxious talking and may avoid speaking in certain situations (e.g. on the telephone, using specific words, or speaking with certain people). School-age children may feel embarrassed about stuttering when giving class presentations, reading aloud or answering questions in class. Stuttering in school-aged children and adolescents can be linked with anxiety.

## Therapy is effective

The treatment for young children who stutter is fun, easy to implement and highly effective. The most effective method for treating stuttering in young children according to current research is the Lidcombe Program. Effectiveness of the Lidcombe Program with older children is still being researched so early intervention is important. It's best to seek help in a child's preschool years.

## Tips to help your child at home

### Do

- # Let your child finish what he/she is saying, in their own time.
- # Respond to what your child says to show that you are listening.
- # Notice/praise your child when he or she is fluent.
- # Have your child assessed by a Speech Pathologist.

### Don't

- # Interrupt your child's speech or complete his/her sentences.
- # Focus on the negative aspects of your child's speech.
- # Let other people make comments about your child's talking in front of him/her.
- # Correct the way your child talks.

**If you have any concerns about your child's speech seek professional advice.**