

## Let's Talk About...

# Stuttering or fluency problems

Stuttering is a speech disorder where a child has trouble with the smooth flow of speech. Children who stutter know what they want to say but have trouble saying it.

### What does stuttering sound like?

Stuttering may sound like this:

- Repeating part of or whole words ('M...m...m...Mom' or 'Can...can...can I go?')
- Repeated phrases ('Can I go...can I go...can I go to the store?')
- Stretched out sounds ('Ssssssister' or 'whaaaat')
- Blocks (moments where no sounds come out when your child is trying to speak)

### What causes stuttering?

No one knows exactly what causes stuttering, but it may be related to the brain activity that produces speech.

- Stuttering can run in families. If a parent or relative stutters, your child has a higher chance of stuttering.

- Anxiety or stress can make stuttering worse.
- Stuttering is not caused by low intelligence, emotional problems, parenting style or personality type.

### What do I need to know about stuttering?

- Most children begin stuttering between 2–5 years old, when they start putting words together into short sentences.
- Stuttering may start suddenly or gradually. It may become more severe later if it isn't treated.
- Boys are 2 times more likely to stutter than girls. Stuttering can be more severe over time and even throughout the day.
- Getting early treatment for your child's stuttering is best. Some children grow out of stuttering without treatment, but it's impossible to know if that will happen for your child.
- Your child may stutter more when they are excited, tired, nervous, arguing, competing to be heard, using complicated words, or have limited time to speak.



