

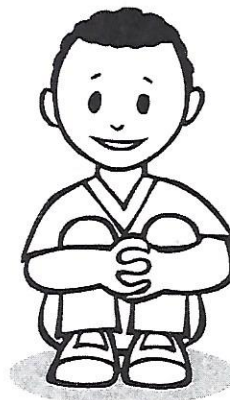
## **I know a child who stutters. What can I do to help?**

The best way to help a child who stutters is to work closely with his/her speech therapist. In therapy the child will be taught strategies to pull out of a stuttering situation, avoid a stuttering situation, and correct a stuttering situation. If these strategies are reinforced at home and school, then the child will usually begin to use them independently.

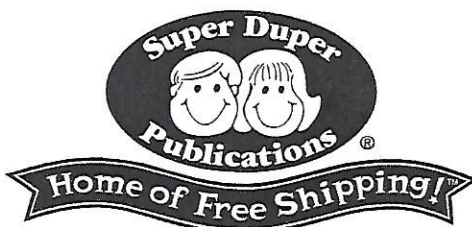
### **Some general ways to help a child who stutters are as follows:**

- \* Don't finish his/her sentences. Children who stutter know what they want to say and generally don't like it when their sentences are completed for them. It elevates their stress levels, possibly increasing instances of stuttering.
- \* Wait patiently for a child to finish. Don't rush a child who stutters. Provide adequate wait time for him/her to complete the thought.
- \* Watch your body language. Children are very aware of your non-verbal reactions to their speech. Keep your face neutral, with an unchanged expression when the child stutters.
- \* Educate others about the child's disorder. Children in the class will be curious about the child's speech. Sometimes they will tease the child about his/her speech. If you teach them about the disorder in a fun, educational way, this may alleviate some of the discomfort.
- \* Keep an open door. Allow the child to come to you at any time to talk about school, family, or any other issues he/she might have.
- \* Monitor the child's classroom achievement. Some children who stutter begin to do poorly in the classroom setting. They may stop volunteering to answer questions or speak in front of the class. Make sure you notice any changes in the child's classroom performance and notify parents if changes occur.

Stuttering is a relatively rare, yet devastating, disorder of speech. It affects nearly every aspect of a child's life. Understanding a child who stutters is a step in the right direction. Working closely with the child's speech therapist will help both the parents and the teacher understand and work with the child who stutters.



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