



Notes for Parents

Between the age of two and six, while speaking, many children begin repeating sounds, syllables, and even whole words. Because children at this age are learning words and whole sentences at breakneck speed, they often have a lot to say in a short time. Their effortless, bubbly speech is called normal nonfluency. Repetitions vary from one child to another and from time to time. Nonfluencies can last from a few days to months; go away; then return. Usually, nonfluencies disappear over time.

We believe it is important to accept children's nonfluencies and to pay more attention to "what" they say rather than "how" they say it. To help families get through this awkward stage of speech development, here are some "do's" and "don'ts":

Dos

- Try to be patient while your child gets the words out.
- Relieve excessive tension in the home.
- Be sure your child gets enough rest, exercise, and eats well.
- Give your child time to talk without interruptions.
- Slow down your own speech, to about the rate you would use if speaking to make a point, or to one who speaks limited English.

Don'ts

- Try not calling attention to your child's speech by words, looks or gestures.
- Try not expecting your child to be "perfect". Do not change his handedness.
- Do not tell your child to "slow down", "take a deep breath", "start over".
- Do not call what your child does stuttering.
- Should nonfluencies increase or speaking become such an effort that families are concerned, a speech pathologist should be consulted.