

# **Advice to Teachers**

## **Re: Students with Stuttering**

- **What is stuttering? Stuttering occurs in approximately 1% of the adolescent and adult population. Somewhere between 4-5% of children will experience a period of significant disfluency during development. No one knows exactly what causes stuttering, but research has progressed to a better understanding of the problem.**
  1. **There is strong evidence of a genetic factor, both in families and in the ratio of boys to girls with persistent stuttering (4:1). This gender ratio is similar to that of other neurological disorders such as dyslexia.**
  2. **Approximately 70% of younger children will outgrow stuttering without any intervention.**
  3. **Students with persistent stuttering are not different from the population as a whole in terms of intellect, emotional or psychological characteristics.**
  4. **Students who stutter will vary in the severity of the disfluencies, the type of stuttering, and consistency from day to day. The variability of stuttering can often be puzzling.**
  5. **Stuttering is not an emotional or psychological problem!**
  
- **Suggestion for Teachers!**
  1. **Reduce your rate of speech & delay response with a “pause” to allow for a less “rushed” communication style in your classroom and in interactions with the student.**
  2. **Help improve the student’s self-esteem by focusing on positive communication successes....i.e. completing an assignment, or participating in a discussion. Giving instructions to “slow down”, “take a deep breath” or “stop and start over” implies the student is not “working hard” or “doing enough”.**
  3. **Treat the student who stutters like any other student in class. BUT, make a plan to handle oral presentations. Let the student know that you are open to discuss variations in the presentation to meet his needs. Be flexible!**
  4. **Encourage your student to answer questions in class and to participate in discussions, but, in general, let him decide if he wants to speak. Remember that activities that have the student “waiting for his turn” can often increase tension and anxiety. If your student is having difficulty speaking, you can help by maintaining eye contact and giving him time to respond.**

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