

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

National Stuttering Association

Top Ten “To Do” List For Parents of Preschool Children Ages 2-5

You have a child that may be exhibiting signs of stuttering. New and important developments in education and therapy are happening almost every day. In the mean time, there is **so much that can be done by you, your child and the significant others in your child’s life.**

National Stuttering Association’s (NSA’s) goal is to empower you and your child with knowledge, understanding and hope that will help to build your child’s chances of successful speech development.

What you can do now:

- **Seek the advice and guidance of a stuttering specialist**

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s possible stuttering, seek a speech pathologist specializing in the treatment of childhood stuttering. Do not wait for him to outgrow it! Get an evaluation. Early intervention for developmental stuttering is crucial. The American Speech-Language and Hearing Association provides the NSA with a list of speech pathologists who specialize in fluency disorders throughout the United States.

- **Educate yourselves**

Knowing the facts about developmental stuttering (what is and isn’t normal) and early intervention therapy can help you to make educated decisions regarding the right path for your family to take. It is important for you to make yourself aware of the resources that are available for your child and your family. A stuttering specialist and organizations like the NSA have information that can help you to better understand stuttering.

- **Treat stuttering like any other behavior**

Many parents have been told not to draw attention to their children's stuttering for fear that this will make the stuttering worse. Parents are often confused about what to say when their children stutter, particularly following a tense or long disfluency. View disfluencies like any other difficulty your child may experience when learning a complex task (e.g., learning to skip or ride a bicycle) and treat stuttering with the same positive, patient manner.
- **Give yourself a break**

Parents do NOT cause stuttering. Today you are on the road to helping your child. Together you and your child will take steps toward positive, healthy communication. Your proactive response is creating opportunities for your child's future success.
- **Listen to your child**

Listen to the message, not the stuttering. Rather than concentrating on the way your child is talking, listen to his ideas. Avoid finishing sentences, filling in words or giving simplistic advice such as "just relax, slow down, or take a breath." Encourage your child's communication by showing him that **what** he is saying is more important than **how** he is saying it. Reflect what you have heard back to him so he knows that he is understood.
- **Reduce demands**

As your child enters the important phase of language development, there are many demands on her system of communication. By lessening the amount of demand speech ("tell grandma what you did today") and by using more simple sentences, you can decrease the amount of "talking pressure" on your child's communication system.
- **Model**

You are the model for your child's communication style. It can be rushed, hurried and intense, or it can be an easier, more smooth way of talking. Use shorter, more simple sentences, and take pauses more often. Speak with your child in a relaxed, unhurried manner. When children are surrounded by easy, less-hurried interactions, they feel less pressure to "keep up" thereby possibly reducing the tension in their speech.
- **Decrease Time Pressure**

Time pressure is feeling as though we have to act or speak quickly. Take speaking time pressure off of your child. As parents, you can learn to encourage turn-taking and "no interruptions" rules in your home environment. By using pauses between comments and allowing

silence to happen, you can create an environment of easy, relaxed communication.

- **Take time to learn in small steps**

Remember – These strategies take time to learn. Do not feel discouraged if you find them difficult at first. You can receive specific training about how to make these changes as you partner with a speech professional.

- **Get Connected**

The National Stuttering Association (NSA) is dedicated to providing hope, empowerment, and support for you and your child. Through our connection network, you can be a part of a community of families and children just like yourselves throughout the United States. The greatest gift that you can give yourself and your child is the knowledge that you are not alone and that normal fluency development can be possible!

We hope this information is helpful to you. Remember, the NSA is your partner in support of your child. Please turn this sheet over to discover what else the NSA can do for your family.

We are at the NSA are happy to bring to you the “Top Ten” list that you just read. The National Stuttering Association has become the largest self-help stuttering organization in the world because it works for children and families like yours. NSA, with over 15 benefits to its members, helps the stuttering world in very important ways.

Here are the on going resources the NSA can provide you as you choose to become a member of the National Stuttering Association:

- There are new developments in stuttering therapy happening all the time. NSA communicates this information to its members quickly so they can take advantage. But NSA does more. NSA has a Professional Relations Committee of noted speech-language pathologists and medical professionals. These professionals screen information communicated to members for accuracy.
- NSA provides a resource list of speech-language pathologists who specialize in childhood and adult stuttering therapy. We can help you to connect with the right type of intervention for you and your child.
- We are the world’s largest group of people who stutter. Other parents have faced the situations and uncertainty you are facing right now. We can connect you with someone who understands your frustrations and fears, and can help. Our members have an

unmatched core of experience. NSA members and their families share their experiences and are excellent resources for you.

- With thousands of members, NSA knows about the stress and anxiety parents face in their child's developmental years. The NSA has an exclusive publication for parents of children who stutter. This newsletter, along with our other pamphlets and booklets support NSA's theme: "You are not alone!"

*National Stuttering Association's membership costs only \$35.00 per year. That is only \$3.00 per month...and that covers less than half the cost of providing benefits to its members. **Join the NSA family today!** We welcome you and your child because there is **so much that can be done.***

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