

Parent Practice for Easy Talking

Many children benefit when their parents and others use a slower, more relaxed pace and manner of speaking. A slower rate makes it easier for children to understand their parents, and it increases their ability to learn from parents' language models.

For children who stutter, a slower parental rate can often help them to speak more easily and more fluently – even if the child's own speaking rate does not appear to change.

When parents use a slower speaking rate, this also helps to reduce the *time pressures* their children may feel to speak quickly (“I need to get out everything I want to say before my turn is up or before people become impatient with my stuttering.”) This also gives children more time to plan what they want to say. This helps to improve overall communication.

TIPS for using a slower speaking rate:

- 1) Try to maintain natural intonation and phrasing. Don't stretch out words or use a “sing-song” voice.
- 2) Use some pauses between words, but mostly pauses between *phrases*. You can try to take at least one breath in each sentence to help you remember to pause.
- 3) Wait for a little under one second before beginning to speak when responding to the child's questions or comments.
- 4) Practice by reading sentences and talking with other adults before trying it with your child – slowing your speaking rate and phrasing can be difficult, but with practice, you can do it to help improve your child's speech.

Here are some practice sentences to help you get a feel for slowing, phrasing, and pausing:

When we get home // you can have a snack.

Would you like to read // a book before bed?

When we finish dinner // you can go outside.

I will pick you up // after school.

This toy // looks like it will be fun // to play with.

We need to run some errands // on the way to the park.

Remember, with practice, you can do it!