

Suggestions for Modifying “Rapid-Fire” or Demanding Questions

One way parents can reduce the time pressures a child may feel is by reducing “rapid-fire” or frequent questions. It is important to recognize that the questions themselves do not cause the child to stutter. Some children, however, experience increased difficulty with speech fluency when they are required to respond to frequent questions.

Of course, parents still want to encourage their children to speak and participate in conversation. Here are some ways parents can encourage their children to talk without placing additional demands on them to answer complicated questions. These “non-question starters” or “indirect requests” invite the children to speak on their own schedule. Indirect requests can also stimulate language development without contributing to communicative stressors that may affect fluency.

“I wonder...”

“I think...”

“I bet...”

“I guess...”

“Maybe...”

“It looks like...”

Parents can also use more complicated non-question starters as the child grows...and they can develop their own, keeping in mind that the goal is to *invite* the child to talk without *requiring* that the child talk.

“Let’s see if...”

“Why don’t we try...”

Parents do not have to use these starters *every* time they want to interact with their child. When the child is experiencing difficulty with fluency, or when the child seems reluctant to talk, parents can try these and other ways of encouraging the child to talk without increasing the demands the child experiences.