

Disfluency and Stuttering

Children at risk for stuttering

	<i>Normally Fluent and Normal Nonfluencies</i>	<u>Danger Signs for Stuttering</u>
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Less than 6% would be normally fluent. \$ Between 5%-9% is borderline, but probably ok. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ With 10% or more, we have major danger signs.
Intensity/ Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Disfluencies are easy, effortless and rhythmic. \$ No signs of tension, no increases in pitch or loudness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Danger signs include repetitions that are becoming dysrhythmic, or if there are increases in pitch and/or loudness.
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Very short: brief, fleeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Longer instances may last a second or longer.
Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Revisions and incomplete phrases and sentences, associated with language formulation. \$ Multisyllable whole word repetitions (“into-into the box.”) \$ Occasional single-syllable whole word repetitions, with just one reiteration: e.g., “can-can I go out and play.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Sound prolongations. \$ Sound and Syllable repetitions, especially when more than two reiterations: e.g., “ba-ba-ba-baby.” \$ Hard contacts/silent blockages. \$ Single syllable whole word repetitions, when these occur frequently, or have more than two or more reiterations; e.g., “can-can-can-can I go now.”

Young Children

Normally nonfluent children are unaware of their easy, developmental nonfluencies. When children are becoming aware, or if parents are becoming aware, then these are danger signs that should probably prompt a referral. This is especially the case when these have persisted for more and just a few weeks.

Disfluent cycles in young children can be episodic. You may be seeing the child on his/her best or worst day, so if parents indicate that disfluency is usually worse than what you are seeing, then this is a pretty solid danger sign.

Signs of physical/vocal effort are always danger signs. The same goes for a child who is showing a reluctance to speak due to concerns about (dis)fluency.

Older Children, Teens and Adults

As the problem of stuttering develops, many people learn tricks and crutches that they use to avoid stuttering. They may avoid talking all together, or they may substitute a non-feared word for a feared word, or they may attempt to paraphrase in order to avoid stuttering.