



SPEECH SERVICES SYDNEY & COAST

STUTTERING

WHAT IS A STUTTER?

A stutter exists when there are **disruptions to a child's flow of speech**. Children who stutter know what they want to say but have difficulty saying it.



WHAT CAUSES A STUTTER?

Currently, there is **no certain** cause of stuttering. However, a child is more likely to stutter if they have:

- Family history of stuttering
- Stuttered for 6 months or longer
- Other speech and language disorders

WHY OBSERVE FOR A STUTTER?

- If stuttering persists into adolescence or adulthood, there may be **effects on psychological health** (i.e. social phobia, educational underachievement and reduced social wellbeing).
- There is a 'heightened rate of anxiety disorders' for children with a stutter (7 – 12 years) compared to non-stuttering children
- Provides the speech pathologist with a timeline of when the stuttering was first identified



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CHARACTERISTICS INCLUDE:

Stuttering is the involvement of **involuntary actions** that interrupts the forward flow of speech. These may include, but are not limited to, the following characteristics:

- Repetitions of sounds (e.g. d-d-dog)
- Repetitions of words/phrases (e.g. The-the-the, that one-that one)
- Blocks: Difficulties with starting a sentence
- Prolonged sounds (e.g. ssssay)
- Addition of extra words (e.g. um) and has difficulty moving to the next word
- Secondary behaviours: Behaviours that may accompany speech difficulties
 - Rapid eye blinks
 - Tremors of the lips or jaw
 - Facial tics
 - Involuntary facial expressions (e.g. grimacing)
 - Head jerks
 - Clenching fists

WHEN TO REFER

When any of the above stuttering characteristics are observed, contact a speech pathologist.



PH: (02) 97902324

A: U3/14-16 Myrtle St Rydalmere NSW 2116

E: info@sssandc.com.au

W: www.sssandc.com.au