



When Should I Recommend Therapy for Stuttering?

Many times, children who stutter are in therapy year after year, making little or no progress in either their abilities to use speech management strategies or in their attitudes and feelings toward stuttering. The mere fact that a child stutters does not mean that he necessarily needs to be enrolled in treatment or that it is the right time for treatment. Regardless of your therapeutic philosophy or your approach to stuttering, determining the right time for therapy is a delicate balance. You need to take into account the specific goals you will be setting for the child and the child's readiness to make changes, keeping in mind that the overall goal for treatment is to help the child learn to live successfully with his stuttering. The best tools to gauge a child's readiness for treatment are your connection with the child and your understanding of the child's experiences with his stuttering. Here are some questions to ask yourself when determining whether to recommend therapy.



Questions to Ask Ourselves When Determining Whether to Recommend Therapy

1. What factors appear to affect the child's fluency in different speaking situations?
2. Does the child exhibit physical tension during stuttering?
3. Does the child exhibit negative reactions to stuttering (e.g., fear, anxiety)?
4. Does the child try to prevent stuttering by avoiding words, sounds, or situations?
5. Does the child express a willingness to participate in therapy?
6. What were the child's experiences in past therapy?
7. How does the child feel about prior therapy experiences?
8. Does the child utilize speech therapy strategies learned in prior therapy?
9. Is the child experiencing negative consequences as a result of stuttering?
10. Is the child being teased about stuttering?
11. How is the stuttering affecting the child's life?
12. What are the child's goals for therapy?
13. Is the child's self-esteem affected by stuttering or experiences related to stuttering?
14. Does the child seem ready for therapy?

Adapted from *The Source® for Stuttering Ages 7-18* by Nina A. Reardon-Reeves and J. Scott Yaruss
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