

## RTI INFORMATION FOR TIER 1 AND TIER 2

### BASIC CLASSROOM SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN WHO STUTTER

***What is the best way to let the child participate in verbal activities in the classroom?*** If the child will be reading aloud or will be required to answer a question verbally, call on the child **first**. This will help to decrease anticipation of having problems speaking.

***Are there better ways to begin with a child who stutters?*** Yes, it is helpful to begin by asking questions that require a yes/no answer or short phrase until he/she is ready for short phrases and longer answers.

***Should I call on a student who stutters if they raise their hand?*** Yes! If the student is confident and comfortable enough to raise his/her hand then please use this opportunity for them to speak. New speaking successes build future confidence.

***Note:*** Be conscious of your **facial expressions and nonverbal feedback** when a child stutters. Communication and language is 70% nonverbal and a child can read facial expressions by 12 months of age. Keep a comfortable facial expression and relaxed body language while you are speaking with the child. Modeling slow and relaxed speech is an excellent strategy.

***Should I tell the child to slow down, start over, and/or take a deep breath?*** No. Because this advice may do more damage than good. You do not want to make the child feel that you do not approve of the stuttering, especially when he/she is in front of his peers! It is very helpful and important to allow the child to finish speaking and then make a comment about the content of the message to demonstrate that you were listening to the “what” not the “how” of the child’s message. You do not want to raise the self-consciousness about stuttering.

***Does it matter how others talk and present themselves to the child who stutters?*** Absolutely. Children who stutter are affected by Time Pressures. Rapid turn taking, attendance roll call, and interruptions convey a sense of time pressure. It is very helpful when you present yourself in an easy going manner.

***What can I do to help prevent teasing?*** Teasing should never be tolerated. Once the bully has been identified, it is often best to have the bully/victim set face-to face in a private setting and settle things.

***What should I do if the child and peers realize that he/she stutters?*** If the child has already developed stuttering severity that is obvious to him/her and peers, it may be helpful to educate the class about stuttering. It is really important to “frame” stuttering in a way that the child’s self-image is intact. Parents and the SLP should be consulted if this is being considered. A general class discussion about differences between people is a good way to begin the discussion. There are many great strategies that the SLP can help to facilitate in the classroom setting.

- **Always** provide for successful speaking situations in all educational settings. Meet with and pass along this information to all who work with this child.
- Preparing **substitute teachers** is critical! Talk with them about your strategies and prepare them for the special needs of this student. A well-meaning but an “unknowing” person can play havoc with months of successful therapy!

***Should I just excuse the child from participating in some things?*** No. However, sometimes some adjustments may be helpful, but excusing a child from participating may develop *secondary gains* for stuttering – he/she may have less incentive to improve. The SLP can help develop a plan for various situations.