

## Inside This Issue:

- Book for parents of preschoolers
- More on electronic devices
- What causes stuttering?

## Highlights:

Stuttering Center Update	2
Hot Topic	2
Mission Statement	2
Mailing List	3
Q & A	3
Kids Speak	3
SLP Corner	3



A joint venture of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Department of Communication Science and Disorders at the University of Pittsburgh

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<http://www.stutteringcenter.org>

## Stuttering Center to Offer New Summer Fluency Groups

The Stuttering Center of Western PA will be running *fluency groups* in the South (Bethel Park) and East (Monroeville) satellite locations this summer. The groups will be geared toward school-age children who have received or are currently receiving individual speech treatment for stuttering at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

These fluency groups will meet three to four times over the summer months on Monday (Bethel Park) or Tuesday (East) in the late afternoon.

Children will be able to meet other children who stutter. They will also have the chance to work on carryover of therapy goals in a group setting with their peers.

Over the next several months, groups will also be started in our other Children's Hospital locations (Wexford and Oakland).

If you would like more information on the groups, or if you would like to make a referral to the group, please contact Craig Coleman at [craig.coleman@chp.edu](mailto:craig.coleman@chp.edu) or by phone at (412) 666-3825.

## Fourth World Congress on Fluency Disorders

The International Fluency Association (IFA) will host the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Fluency Disorders in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The conference will run from August 11 through 15, 2003. Registration and program information can be obtained from the IFA's website at [www.ifacongress2003.com](http://www.ifacongress2003.com).

The Stuttering Center of Western PA will be well represented at the World Congress, with a total of 8 presentations involving Stuttering Center staff members. Presentations include:

*Many types of data: Stuttering treatment outcomes beyond fluency* (J. Scott Yaruss)

*Building Bridges with allied professionals* (J. Scott Yaruss)

*Evaluating a parent/child treatment program for preschool children who stutter* (Craig Coleman, J. Scott Yaruss, & Dave Hammer)

*Maintenance of fluency in extra-clinical settings: lack of empirical data?* (Cari Tellis)

*Examining variability of speaking rate within normally speaking preschool children* (Brett Kluetz & J. Scott Yaruss)

*Overall assessment of the speaker's experience of stuttering* (OASES) (J. Scott Yaruss)

*How can consumer associations support stuttering research and researchers?* (J. Scott Yaruss)

*The co-occurrence of word-finding disorders in children who stutter* (Jenna Batik & J. Scott Yaruss)

Many presenters from around the world will be highlighted at the IFA Congress. In the October Issue of the *News*, we will present a summary of key presentations.





### **Stuttering Center Update: Booklet for Parents of Preschoolers**

The National Stuttering Association (NSA), the largest support group in the U.S.A for people who stutter, now offers the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of their booklet, *Preschool Children who Stutter: Information and Support for Parents*. The Stuttering Center's J. Scott Yaruss and colleague Nina Reardon are co-authors of the 56-page guide.

The main purpose of the booklet is to answer parents' questions about stuttering so they can make informed decisions about their child's treatment. The booklet provides current information about early intervention and provides numerous suggestions to help parents support their children's development of more fluent speech.

The book also helps parents identify resources about stuttering and stuttering therapy. The text is organized into a 5-step plan that parents can use to help their child.

The book can be ordered through the NSA's website at [www.WeStutter.org](http://www.WeStutter.org) or by calling 1-800-We-Stutter (1-800-937-8888). Cost of the book is \$5.00.

### **Hot Topic: Stuttering Center Responds to Inside Edition**

*Inside Edition* feature fails to report both sides of fluency enhancing devices.

In the last edition of the *Stuttering Center News*, we discussed devices that claim to control fluency. Following that discussion, a feature on these devices was shown on *Inside Edition*, the television news magazine. The report contained numerous oversights, omissions, and exaggerations.

A response, written by Craig Coleman, Co-Director of the Stuttering Center can be found on our website [www.stutteringcenter.org](http://www.stutteringcenter.org). As of this printing, *Inside Edition* has not responded to our concerns.

The number of errors contained in the feature that aired on *Inside Edition* was alarming for several reasons.

First, it was clear that many obvious facts about stuttering had not been researched.

Second, the story created a perception that the electronic device was a "cure" for 80-90% of people who stutter. To date, there are no data to support that claim.

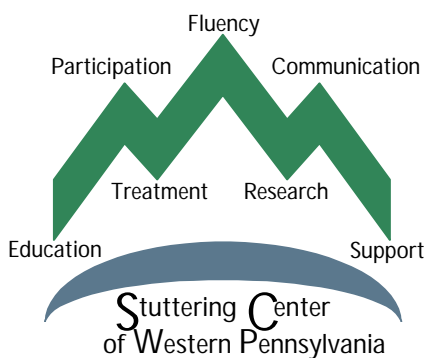
Third, the story overlooked other treatment approaches that *do* have data to support their clinical effectiveness.

Finally, the feature provided no pre- or post-treatment data, only a sample of the user's speech immediately following the introduction of the device. This would not account for the saturation effect, which is known to exist for these devices.

A saturation effect means that the treatment (in this case, delayed auditory feedback) becomes less effective over time as its initial power fades. This is comparable to a person with chronic pain who takes over the counter aspirin or pain relievers. Over time, more and more pills are needed to achieve the same effect as one or two pills initially provided.

We feel obligated to share our concerns with you so you can make an informed decision about these devices. It is also important that you recognize how any treatment approach may get distorted in the media. While the media's job is to provide an interesting story, we feel that many critical facts were left out of the feature on *Inside Edition*. The result may have been a misleading story.

While we hope that *Inside Edition* will respond to our concerns, it seems unlikely that both sides of the issue will be told. At the time of this writing, the *Inside Edition* website has an advertisement for a company that makes these devices.



### **The Stuttering Center of Western PA's four-part mission.....**

- **Treatment for people who stutter**
- **Research on the nature and treatment of stuttering**
- **Education for students and clinicians interested in learning more about stuttering**
- **Support for people who stutter, their families, and their clinicians**



### Q & A: What Causes Stuttering?

When discussing the causes of stuttering with the families of children who stutter, it is important to dispel myths or misconceptions that may exist in the parents' minds.

First, stuttering is *not* an emotional disorder, and it is not caused by nervousness or excitement. It is true that excitement or nervousness may lead to increased stuttering in a given situation. Still, this does not mean that these factors *cause* stuttering.

Second, stuttering is not caused by being around other people who stutter. Children do not "catch" stuttering by listening to parents, siblings, or friends.

Third, stuttering is not caused by parents. While parents can learn strategies to help their child speak more fluently, they do not cause stuttering.

Current theories suggest that stuttering is caused not by a single factor (as suggested by the myths summarized above). Instead, research has focused on *multiple* factors, which interact in a complex manner to contribute to children's production of speech disfluencies and stuttering.

We do know that there is a genetic component to stuttering. Children are more likely to stutter if someone else in the family also stutters.

There are also several other factors are involved in the development of stuttering. For example, children with language or speech motor deficits are at higher risk for stuttering. Other children may exhibit advanced language skills that their developing motor system cannot yet handle. Finally, some children may not be bothered at all by their disfluencies, while others may be more sensitive or concerned about "mistakes" in their speech. These factors, as well as others we do not yet recognize, may *interact* in different ways for different children to contribute to the likelihood that a child will stutter.

### Kids Speak

In this edition, a 10 year-old who stutters gives his view on stuttering:

"I don't really think about stuttering as anything. It is just something that I do. All the things I've learned help

me to not stutter as much. If you stutter like I do, I wouldn't worry about it that much. It is just something you do in your life. Don't let other kids pick on you or tell you it is bad to stutter. That's not true-it's ok to stutter."

### SLP Corner: Taking It To The Streets: Targeting Generalization of Fluency Objectives

One of the biggest challenges facing SLPs who treat stuttering is ensuring that goals achieved in the clinical setting are carried over to other real-world settings. There are a number of ways to improve carryover of fluency objectives. Below are some of the strategies we have found to be beneficial:

1. When appropriate, use groups to help children carryover treatment strategies with their peers. This can be done with a group of

only children who stutter, or children who stutter and their peers who do not stutter. Be sure to work on both fluency *and* attitudes and emotions within the group setting.

2. Take the child to different locations to target fluency and attitudinal objectives. If you are working in the schools, this can be done by taking the child to the cafeteria, the playground, the principal's office, etc. In an outpatient setting, it may be possible to take the child to

the hospital cafeteria or to a local mall or store. Be sure to check your facility's policy on taking clients off-site.

3. Have children bring a sibling or their parents to some of the treatment sessions. Work with the entire family on fluency objectives. Help the child teach others in the family about stuttering.

These are just a few suggestions you may find helpful if you have other ideas you would like to share, please send them to us.

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**The Stuttering Center offers evaluation and treatment through Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in Oakland and at our satellite offices in Bethel Park, Monroeville, and Wexford. Visit the Children's Hospital website at [www.chp.edu](http://www.chp.edu) for directions.**

### Find us on the Web!

[www.stutteringcenter.org](http://www.stutteringcenter.org)

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**Send us your questions  
and comments!!!**

