

# Stuttering Center News

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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>

## Back to School: A Time of Transition

One of the most difficult times of the year for children who stutter is the beginning of school. The child not only has to deal with changes in schedule, but also many new relationships. It can be a particularly trying time for young children who stutter.

Given the challenges that transitioning to school can bring, it is important for parents, teachers, and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to be on the same page in

helping the child overcome the hurdles of beginning the school year.

At the Stuttering Center of Western Pennsylvania, we are aware of the challenges that parents, children, teachers, and SLPs face in the early part of the school year. We have developed a hand-out packet that might help smooth the transition by making sure everyone involved in the child's care has the information they need to

help the child become an active participant in the classroom. If you would like to receive this packet via email, contact Craig Coleman at [craig.coleman@chp.edu](mailto:craig.coleman@chp.edu)

We are also available to answer any questions that you, your students, or their parents and teachers, may have during the school year.

We wish you an enjoyable start to the new school year!

## Stuttering Center Information

This month, we have several updates to provide:

1. We have added a new feature to our website that will enable visitors to view handouts or overheads from presentations we have given at various national and international conferences. Several handouts are currently available. Visit our website at [www.stutteringcenter.org](http://www.stutteringcenter.org) and click on "Handouts" on the left side bar to view these presentations.

2. Accompanying this newsletter is a **survey** on the helpfulness of the newsletter.

This is now the fourth issue and we would like to see how effective the newsletter has been, in terms of providing the information and resources you need. Our goal is to make this newsletter as helpful to you as possible, so we need your input. Please take a few minutes and complete the survey. It will help us continue to provide information that you can use to help children who stutter in your specific clinical setting.

3. We would like to welcome the newest member of the Stuttering Center of Western PA team:, Kristin Pelczarski.

Kristin will be at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, South Satellite, while working toward her doctorate degree. We are excited to have Kristin on board.

4. We will continue to offer group treatment for school-age children in our South (Bethel Park) and East (Monroeville) locations this fall. In addition, we will also add pre-school groups in both of these locations. If you are interested in these groups, email Craig Coleman at [craig.coleman@chp.edu](mailto:craig.coleman@chp.edu) for more information.





### ***Stuttering Center Update: New Book for SLPs***

A new book, entitled *The Source for School-Age Stuttering*, is now available from LinguSystems.

The Stuttering Center's co-director, J. Scott Yaruss, and colleague Nina Reardon co-authored the 300-page book.

This resource will guide you through all aspects of assessment and treatment. Readers will be able to learn about the entire stuttering

disorder and how it impacts a child's life in all communication settings.

The book outlines where to start in therapy, how to plan and implement therapy, how to develop practice exercises that can be used in the "real world," how to work effectively with teachers and parents, and much more.

The book also provides a wealth of reproducible forms

and handouts that can be used in the assessment and treatment of stuttering for school-age children.

For more information on this valuable guide, check out the LinguSystems website at: [www.linguisystems.com](http://www.linguisystems.com) (you can go directly to the listing for the book by clicking [here](#)). Or, email Dr. Yaruss at [jsyaruss@csd.pitt.edu](mailto:jsyaruss@csd.pitt.edu).

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*Treatment of stuttering should target the entire disorder, not just the disfluencies.*



### ***Hot Topic: Treatment Beyond Disfluency Measures***

When treating school-age children and adolescents children who stutter, it is often necessary to find a balance between reducing stuttering frequency and increasing positive attitudes about communication in order to achieve the best possible outcome from treatment.

While targeting a reduction in the number of disfluencies is obviously a primary goal, it is also critical to help the child in many other areas.

First, we must help the child *modify his stuttering* by reducing physical tension and eliminating any secondary behaviors (e.g., eye-blinking, head nodding, etc.) that may be associated with stuttering.

Second, we must help the child *become a more effective communicator*. We need to make sure that the child's stuttering is not limiting his participation in educational or social settings. Is the child not participating in class because he does not know the answer, or because he is afraid he might stutter?

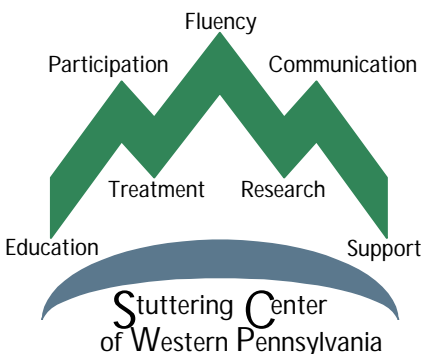
Third, we need to help the child overcome any negative feelings or emotions that may be associated with his stuttering. We can help him see that he can still achieve whatever he wants to achieve in life. His stuttering should *not* be a limiting factor. Many children need a lot of practice before they become desensitized to stuttering.

Finally, we want to help the child become the "expert" about his stuttering. By providing the child with a wealth of knowledge about stuttering, we can empower him to take control of his reactions to his speaking difficulties. He can then take the lead in educating parents, peers, teachers, etc. about stuttering. This also helps children respond more appropriately when others ask them about stuttering.

By using a treatment approach that encompasses *the whole disorder*, rather than just the disfluencies, we can help children who stutter achieve objectives that will help them cope with stuttering for a lifetime.

### ***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: Can Stuttering Be Cured?

As speech-language pathologists, one of the questions we are often asked when evaluating or treating school-age children or adolescents is "Is there a cure for stuttering?" The answer to this question is more complicated than it may seem.

Even though there is no cure for stuttering, there are effective treatments. When administered appropriately, speech therapy for stuttering may be compared to wearing glasses or contact lenses to correct vision. They do not

cure your eyes, but they do help you become more functional in important ways.

While there is currently no data to support any "miracle cures" for stuttering, effective treatments are helping people stutter less and become better communicators.

We feel that it is critical to establish appropriate objectives for treatment very early in the evaluation/treatment process. One way to do this is to make sure that the child and his family understand that his stuttering will not

just "go away forever" one day. Instead, we can help them focus on more realistic objectives that will help the child in many areas. Our goals are typically to help the child stutter less, help the child stutter with less physical tension, help increase the child's participation in social and educational activities, help the child overcome negative reactions to his stuttering, and help the child become an "expert" about stuttering. These goals help the child see that significant progress *can* be achieved.

### Kids Speak

Beginning with the October 2003 edition, the *Stuttering Center News* will no longer have the *Kids Speak* section of the newsletter. Instead, the *Kids Speak* section will be published as its own one-page newsletter just for kids! This newsletter will be pub-

lished quarterly and will be geared toward helping children understand stuttering and share their views with other children. If you or your children have a submission for this newsletter, please feel free to send ideas to [craig.coleman@chp.edu](mailto:craig.coleman@chp.edu)

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### SLP Corner: Musical Chairs in Therapy

Note: This article was written by Lisa Flummer, M.A., CF-SLP. Lisa was a graduate student clinician at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Stuttering Center of Western PA in the summer of 2003.

The following activity may be used as a way to assist the young child who stutters in producing fluent speech, and increasing awareness of the various types of "bumpy" speech that may occur. More specifically, this activity helps the child to distinguish slow easy speech, repetitions (ba-ba-ball), and prolongations (sssslow).

The clinician should begin the activity by collecting pictures that represent the types of disfluencies or speaking strategies that are being targeted. For example, the clinician may use pictures of a turtle (representing slow speech), a kangaroo (representing repetitions or "bouncy" speech), and a snake (representing prolongations or "slidey" speech). The clinician may decide on the specific number of each picture that would be appropriate for the child. These pictures should be evenly placed in a circle on the floor. The clinician can then instruct the child to walk

around on the pictures while the clinician plays some form of music (keyboard, harmonica, xylophone, etc.). The child is instructed that when the music stops, he should stop on the picture he is currently on. The child should then produce the type of speech he has landed on when the music stops. A clinician model may be required depending on the child's level.

The clinician or other children can also participate in the activity. Parents may observe the activity and perform the activity at home, allowing for further reinforcement of speech goals.

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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!!!**

