



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

Stuttering Center News

Stuttering and Co-Occurring Speech/Language Disorders

Craig Coleman, M.A., CCC-SLP and Rosemary Wilson, M.A., CCC-SLP

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Editors & Co-Directors
of the Stuttering Center
of Western PA:

Craig E. Coleman, M.A.
J. Scott Yaruss, Ph.D.

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One challenge that clinicians frequently encounter is evaluating and treating children who stutter and also exhibit co-occurring speech or language deficits. Although many of the assessment and treatment principles used with these children will be similar to those used with children who exhibit a deficit in only speech/language development or fluency, there are some distinctions that can help clinicians achieve success.

The primary focus in this newsletter is children who stutter and exhibit concomitant speech/language disorders. First, we will describe what a typical evaluation may consist of. Next, we will discuss treatment objectives and activities. Finally, we will review a recent article that explains this process in much more detail.

Evaluation

When evaluating a child with both fluency and speech/language concerns, clinicians must be prepared to assess all areas thoroughly. Additional time spent during the initial evaluation will be worth it, as this will facilitate the treatment process.

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) should use both formal and informal measures in assessments. To evaluate a child's stuttering, we typically use parent reports, disfluency frequency counts, Stuttering Severity Instrument-3 (SSI-3; Riley, 1994) scores and severity ratings, and measures of the overall impact of the child's stuttering, such as the ACES (Assessment of the Child's Experience of Stuttering; Coleman, Yaruss, & Quesal, 2004).

In addition, we try to obtain speech samples in various situations (e.g., with parents, with the clinician, with and without time pressure and speaking demands, etc.) to gain a sense of the variability of the child's stuttering.

Since we already gather speech samples to assess fluency, we can utilize the same samples to gain information about the child's speech and language skills. Some SLPs may use speech samples to formally analyze a child's speech and language abilities through measures such as speech intelligibility, mean length of utterance (MLU), number of different words, etc., while others may use the obtained speech samples as in informal supplement to a more formal standardized test. Of course, numerous tests are available to assess areas such as speech sound production, expressive and receptive vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and receptive language.

Based on results during both formal and informal observations, SLPs can determine if deficits are present in more than one area of speech and language, and the severity and prognosis for each of these deficits. (continued on page 2)

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Treatment

For children who require treatment for both stuttering and another area of speech/language development, many options are available. For younger children, we typically begin treatment with our Parent/Child Training Program (PCTP), where we begin the process of educating and counseling parents about stuttering (and other disorders, if applicable). Next, children begin to receive treatment targeting both fluency and speech/language objectives.

For older children, some parent education and counseling may still be needed, particularly during the early stages of treatment. Thus, even though the PCTP is not formally administered for older children, we still may begin treatment with 1-2 parent-only, or parent-child education sessions to provide the knowledge base needed for successful treatment.

Objectives and Activities

Because treatment objectives are likely to target improved fluency and speech/language skills, treatment activities

should be selected that reflect *both* of these objectives at the same time. Here are some brief examples of activities targeting multiple goals that we have found to be useful with children exhibiting concomitant disorders:

1. **Auditory bombardment** when modeling fluency enhancing speech patterns. SLPs and parents can begin modeling targeted sounds and language concepts during the early stages of treatment, while working on learning and using speech patterns that reduce time pressure and speaking demands.

2. **Recasting / Rephrasing:** Recasting or rephrasing a child’s utterances has proven to be an effective method of treating children with language deficits. It is also a strategy that we commonly utilize in the PCTP to facilitate fluency. Recasting / rephrasing allows children to understand that their message was successfully received, even though they may have stuttered or exhibited some type of speech sound or language error. It also allows parents and SLPs to expand on the child’s utterances and provide a model of more age-appropriate speech, language, or fluency.

3. **Turtle Speech Hike:** In this activity, children practice using their “turtle speech,” which is described to them as a slow, easy way of talking. Children move pieces around a game board or participate in other games or movement tasks until they find pictures that begin with a target sound or address a targeted language concept. Children then describe the picture using their “turtle speech” in order to continue advancing on the board or to the next spot in the game. This way, children have the opportunity to use targeted sounds or concepts without the clinician needing impose any particular demand for them to do so. *(Continued on page 3)*

Tribute
to Nancy McKinley

On January 8, 2005, the entire speech-language pathology community lost one of its greatest advocates and most gifted professionals in Nancy McKinley. Nancy was not only an expert in childhood language disorders; she also founded and developed *Thinking Publications*, one of the largest publishers of speech/language materials in the country.

All of us at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Stuttering Center of Western PA express our sincere condolences to Nancy’s family and to the Thinking Publications staff. Even though Nancy will be greatly missed by the entire profession, her legacy will live forever through those she influenced.

The Nancy McKinley Scholarship was established with the Wisconsin Speech and Hearing Association (WSHA) Foundation, Inc. to honor Nancy. Memorial contributions to her scholarship should be sent to: Nancy McKinley WSHAF Scholarship Fund, PO Box 163, Eau Claire, WI, 54702-0163.

Message From the Stuttering Center

Craig Coleman

J. Scott Yaruss



Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions.
We now have nearly 500 people receiving the newsletter.
We look forward to more joining soon!

In general, we try to avoid tasks that require a large amount of drill work until a child's fluency has stabilized. Since there are many "indirect" and elicitation tasks that can be carried out to address speech and language objectives, drill work can usually be delayed, or avoided entirely, for children who stutter who may be more sensitive to specific demands to produce speech in a particular fashion.

It is important to note that children with more severe speech or language deficits and relatively mild stuttering may require more intensive work on speech and language objectives, while formal stuttering treatment may not be needed until a child's speech and language skills have progressed.

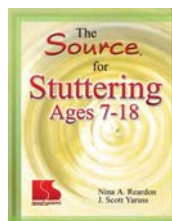
Additionally, children with significant comprehension, cognitive, behavior or attention deficits may not have a strong prognosis for success in stuttering treatment until these areas have been addressed.

In conclusion, children who stutter and exhibit co-occurring speech/language deficits can have varying prognoses and overall treatment plans. If treatment plans are developed that target all areas of the child's speech and language needs, with activities designed to facilitate success in these areas, children can still make significant gains that will help them become more effective communicators in addition to addressing their specific speech/language concerns.



NEW Publications by Stuttering Center Staff

The Stuttering Center's J. Scott Yaruss, with Nina Reardon have written a new book! *The Source for Stuttering: Ages 7-18*, available from LinguiSystems, provides a wealth of information about diagnosis and treatment, including numerous forms, handouts, and worksheets to help you help children who stutter. Contact Dr. Yaruss at jsyaruss@csd.pitt.edu or check out www.LinguiSystems.com for more info!



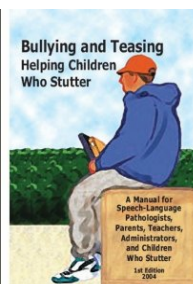
INSURANCE ADVOCACY
AND STUTTERING
Getting The Coverage You Need
Getting The Coverage You Deserve
National Stuttering Association



A new brochure from the National Stuttering Association (NSA), entitled *Insurance Advocacy and Stuttering*, describes the appeals process and provides tips on how to ensure coverage for stuttering treatment.

The new brochure was developed by the NSA's Insurance Advocacy Committee, chaired by Craig Coleman. For more information, send a note to Craig at craig.coleman@chp.edu!

Also new from the NSA is a comprehensive booklet designed to minimize bullying and hurtful teasing for children who stutter. Written by Bill Murphy, Bob Quesal, Nina Reardon, and J. Scott Yaruss, the manual includes separate sections for parents, teachers, school administrators, SLPs, and, of course, children who stutter. For more info, see the NSA's website www.WeStutter.org or email jsyaruss@csd.pitt.edu.



Upcoming Events

Stuttering Center staff will present several workshops in the coming months. For more information, check out our website at www.StutteringCenter.org

Workshops Include:

- Online Chat (2/21) at www.speech-languagepathologist.org
- Pittsburgh, PA (Children's Institute): "Southwestern PA ASHA Revisited" (2/24)
- *Practical Treatment Strategies for Children Who Stutter* (Yaruss)
 - Portland, ME (3/9)
 - Newton, MA (3/10)
 - Knoxville, TN (3/11)
 - Brooklyn, NY (3/18)
 - East Lansing, MI (4/7)
 - Schaumburg, IL (4/8)
- *Counseling Strategies for Families of Individuals with Communication Disorders* (Yaruss)
 - Pittsburgh PA (4/1)
- Pittsburgh, PA (3/31): Pennsylvania Speech and Hearing Association Annual Convention

(see a summary of Stuttering Center PSHA presentations on Page 4)

You can view handouts from previous presentations by J. Scott Yaruss and Craig Coleman at:

www.stutteringcenter.org/Handouts

*If you would like information on scheduling an in-service presentation with either J. Scott Yaruss or Craig Coleman, please let us know!

www.stutteringcenter.org

Research Update: Stuttering & Other Speech and Language Disorders

Craig Coleman, M.A., CCC-SLP and
Rebecca Roccon, M.S., CF-SLP

In the February 2003 edition of *Seminars in Speech and Language: Facing the Challenges of Treating Stuttering in the Schools*, Drs. Ken Logan of the University of Florida and Lisa LaSalle of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire discussed models of treatment for children exhibiting both stuttering and concomitant speech/language disorders. This article is highly recommended for all those who work with children who stutter.

The authors posed four questions that should be addressed when choosing a treatment model:

1. How severe are the impairments?
2. How do the impairments affect daily activities?
3. How do others react to the impairments?
4. How likely are the impairments to resolve without treatment?

It is suggested that, when the child's fluency is deemed the top priority, fluency should be stabilized before other speech/language targets are given priority. During this phase of treatment, clinicians *and parents* should accept existing speech and language forms, even if they are inaccurate, knowing that they will be addressed at a later stage in therapy

When both fluency and speech/language goals are priorities, the authors argue that a cyclic approach may be best. In this approach, fluency is targeted for a period of time, then speech/language is targeted. Later, treatment returns to fluency goals, and so on. Drs. Logan

and LaSalle provide examples of various models that can be utilized to accomplish this iterative treatment model so all of the child's goals can be addressed over time.

According to the authors, no matter what approach is utilized, SLPs should carefully monitor all aspects of a child's speech and language skills, and more importantly, the impact that deficits in these areas may have on their communication and everyday life. For example, a child who stuttering appears to be very mild may have strong negative reactions to stuttering. In such a case, stuttering should be given a priority in treatment even though the stuttering behaviors may not necessarily be as observable as the speech or language concerns.

The full reference for this outstanding article is:

Logan, K. J. & LaSalle, L. R. (2003). Developing intervention programs for children with stuttering and concomitant impairments. *Seminars in Speech and Language*, 24, pp. 13-19.

We encourage you to read it!



PSHA Update

The Annual Convention of the Pennsylvania Speech and Hearing Association will be held from March 31, 2005 through April 2, 2005 in Pittsburgh, PA. More information, as well as registration materials, for the conference can be found at www.psha.org

Members of the Stuttering Center of Western PA will be participating in the following sessions:

- *Childhood Stuttering and Teachers: From the Clinic to the Classroom*
- *Treating School-Age Children who Stutter: Objectives and Activities*
- *Insurance Advocacy and Stuttering*
- *Research and Training Update in Fluency Disorders*
- *Counseling Parents of Children who Have Speech and Language Difficulties*

We look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh at the PSHA conference and we hope to see you in the audience at one of our sessions.

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Department of Audiology and
Communication Disorders

3705 Fifth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Phone: (412) 692-5575
Fax: (412) 692-5563

The Stuttering Center offers evaluation and treatment for children who stutter 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 for directions.

Find us on the Web!

www.stutteringcenter.org

Craig Coleman, MA, CCC-SLP
craig.coleman@chp.edu

J. Scott Yaruss, PhD, CCC-SLP
jsyaruss@csd.pitt.edu