A BACK-TO-SCHOOL SURVIVAL GUIDE

for Kids/Students Who Stutter

Written and Illustrated by
The Stuttering Summer Camp
Eleanor M. Luse Center
University of Vermont
2017

NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION
CHANGING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO STUTTER
WESTUTTER.ORG
Hi, my name is Abby and I am a person who stutters. I love to swim and dance. One day, I hope to go skydiving!
Hi, my name is Jake! I like to play basketball and video games. My friends think I’m pretty funny, and I love to breakdance. I am also a person who stutters!
Parts of the Body Involved in Stuttering:

- Lungs
- Voice Box (Larynx)
- Mouth
- Teeth
- Tongue
- Lips
- Jaw
- Brain
Some Things to Know About Stuttering:

Not everyone stutters the same way

Sometimes it is hard when you are in a new places or meeting new people

It can be hard to spell and read

People might get upset if they think you are taking too long to talk

Sometimes, people might even talk over you or interrupt you, but tell them to let you finish!

People might think that people who stutter are dumb (we aren’t)

It is harder to talk on the phone or go through a drive-thru because you can’t see the person you’re communicating with
TIPS FOR MAKING NEW FRIENDS:

Be kind and you will have a new friend.
Abby and her family just moved to Burlington, Vermont. She is going to a new school, and is nervous about making friends.

Here are some tips for Abby and other kids!

1. Be yourself!

2. Don’t be scared to meet new people

3. Try and talk to new people

4. Get to know the other kids
One day, Abby’s new friend at school asked about her stuttering and Abby didn’t know what to say.

What are some things you can tell a friend if they notice your stuttering and ask you about it?

- Explain what stuttering is, and what it means to be a person who stutters!
- I can’t help that I stutter. Sometimes I just do
- I have bumps in my words
- Not all kinds of people are the same. Everyone’s different, and stuttering is one way that I am unique
- Sometimes I stutter if I’m nervous, excited, or I don’t know what to say
TIPS FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION:
Sometimes, Abby’s classmates interrupt her or finish her sentences for her. Everyone gets excited to talk, but Abby feels annoyed when her classmates don’t let her finish.

What can you say when someone interrupts you?

- You interrupted me.
- Please don’t finish my sentences.
- I know it takes me a while, but please let me finish.
- Can you please stop.
- I don’t like that.
What parents want their child’s classmates to know:

Stuttering has nothing to do with intelligence
- My child is not nervous or anxious
- He/she just talks differently
- It is not contagious or a “sickness”
- They do not talk like that on purpose
- It is not something they can “fix”
- There will be smoother and bummer days

Stuttering is just one part of who he/she is
- It does not stop him/her from doing what she/he wants
- He/she is also:
  1. A good friend
  2. Kind
  3. Compassionate
  4. Patient
  5. A good listener
  6. Willing to share

It may take him/her longer to say what he/she wants, but they know what they want to say
- Let them finish (don’t fill-in-the-blanks for them)
- Show they care by being patient and giving them time
- Make good eye contact to show you are listening
- Avoid saying “slow down” or “take a breath”
  - Instead: “I’m listening” or “I want to hear what you have to say”
- It can be difficult to stutter, so try to be empathetic
- It can be frustrating or uncomfortable for the speaker and the listener

Everyone stutters sometimes!
- We all struggle with something (needing glasses, reading, etc.)!
TIPS FOR DEALING WITH BULLIES:

Wo-o-oah! It's a little bumpy!
Abby loves hanging out with her friend Jake! Jake and Abby stand up for each other if other kids are mean to them because of their stuttering.

What can you say if you or a friend is being bullied?

- I stutter and no one can change that.
- Please stop picking on my friend.
- That’s not very nice.
TIPS FOR TEACHERS:
Jake and Abby are in the same class at school. Their teacher tries to help them by giving them plenty of time to answer questions in class, and not interrupting them. She even helped Abby make a video to teach her class about stuttering!

What are some things your teacher could do that would help you in class?

- Know that I stutter!
- Be patient
- Don’t interrupt me
- Don’t put me on the spot
- Give me time to finish what I have to say before calling on someone else
- If I’m talking, ask other kids to be quiet
- Help me give a presentation so the class can learn more about me and what stuttering is!
Dear Mr./Mrs. ____________________,

My name is ____________________ and I am a person who stutters.

In the classroom, it would help me if you,

1. __________________________________

2. __________________________________

3. __________________________________

Sometimes I stutter because __________________________________

or because ____________________________________.

My stutter may sound or look like ____________________________.

Some more about me?

I also like ______________________, ______________________ and ____________________________.

If you would like to know more about people who stutter refer to
http://www.westutter.org or simply ask! I would be happy to answer
your questions!

Sincerely,

_________________________________________

University of Vermont Eleanor M. Luse Center
School-Age Stuttering Summer Camp 2017
burlingtonstutters@gmail.com
What parents want their child’s teacher to know about children who stutter:

1. That they stutter, if not already shared by an SLP
2. Stuttering is not always the same, and can change day-to-day and over time for a child
3. Certain situations trigger stuttering, like raised voices, excitement, talking over one another
4. It can be hard for a child who stutters to participate fully in class and social activities
5. Awareness of their stuttering will help them to be seen and acknowledged

What parents would like teachers to do:

1. Redirect painful silence by asking an easier question, offering an opportunity to return to that question later, or giving a supportive lead-in (“I remember when you said…”)
2. Let them finish without interruption
3. Be positive and supportive in their moments of stuttering by maintaining eye contact, listening patiently, and reassuring them
4. Wait for a good (private) moment to directly speak with them about the stuttering
5. Tune into their social interactions, and notice if they are being teased or left out
6. Discuss possible accommodations to allow them to participate fully (e.g. in presentations)
7. Try to discern if they are not responding because of their stuttering or because of comprehension (offer an ‘out’ or option such as “do you want to think about that?”)
8. Check in with parent and child regularly about how they are doing in class
What’s AWESOME about being a person who stutters!

You can take your time

You get to meet new people who stutter

Some people have siblings to help them

A lot of people don’t stutter, but some people do and that is special

We get encouragement and help

You’re different because you stutter, so that is cool

We can go to fun camps or support groups

Together, we are strong!
STUTTERING IS

amazing

cool

fantastic

fine

worth it"

good

Awesome!!

go

cool