

# Stuttering in Schools: A Resource for Teachers

Australian Stuttering Research Centre



## Facts about stuttering

- Stuttering is a physical condition underpinned by a slight “glitch” in the way the brain plans speech production.
- Stuttering can get worse in certain contexts such as,
  - social situations
  - talking in front of a group
  - talking on the phone
  - talking with an authority figure
  - when “put on the spot” to talk
  - when tired or unwell
- Stuttering is not related to intelligence.
- Students may try to conceal their stuttering and so may not volunteer to answer questions or talk in front of the class.
- Children who stutter are at high risk of being teased or bullied by peers.
- Speech pathologists can help students manage their stuttering.
- In Australia, stuttering is legally a disability.

## How can teachers help a student who stutters?

- Talk to the student privately about their stuttering and ask,
  - how the student would like you to help
  - if the student is comfortable to answer questions or read aloud in class
  - if the student would like you (or perhaps the student) to talk about stuttering to the class
- Listen patiently when the student is talking,
  - don't interrupt
  - don't finish sentences
- Check to see if the student is being teased or bullied.
- Consult with the learning support team, including a parent, about further strategies to address the student's needs, e.g. referral to a speech pathologist.

## Useful websites

Australian Stuttering Research Centre: [sydney.edu.au/health\\_sciences/asrc/](http://sydney.edu.au/health_sciences/asrc/)

Stuttering Unit, South Western Sydney Local Health District:

[www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/bankstown/stuttering/](http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/bankstown/stuttering/)

Australian Speak Easy Association (self-help and advocacy group):

[www.speakeasy.org.au/](http://www.speakeasy.org.au/)

DVD for teachers, *Wait, wait, I'm NOT finished yet*:

[www.stammeringcentre.org/guides](http://www.stammeringcentre.org/guides)