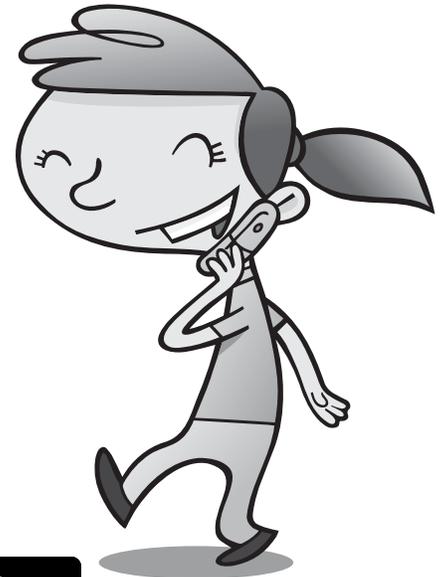


## Cluttering

By Kevin Stuckey, M. Ed., CCC-SLP

### What Is Cluttering?

Cluttering is a fluency disorder where an individual speaks rapidly and/or with an irregular speaking rate and demonstrates excessive dysfluencies such as blocks, repetitions, prolongations, etc. Other symptoms can include language or phonological (sound pattern) errors as well as attention deficits (St. Louis, last updated 2009, ¶ 2). There is no “cure” for cluttering; however, an individual can learn certain techniques to improve speaking rate, language skills, and attention.



### What Are Cluttering Characteristics?

The following are some common symptoms of cluttering (Ramig & Dodge, 2005, ¶ 8-9):

- Rapid rate (talking too fast)
- Overarticulation of words (putting additional emphasis on speech sounds)
- Inappropriate breaks in speech patterns (pauses where there shouldn't be pauses)
- Monotone speech (little inflection—sounding like a robot)
- Excessive dysfluencies/stuttering behaviors

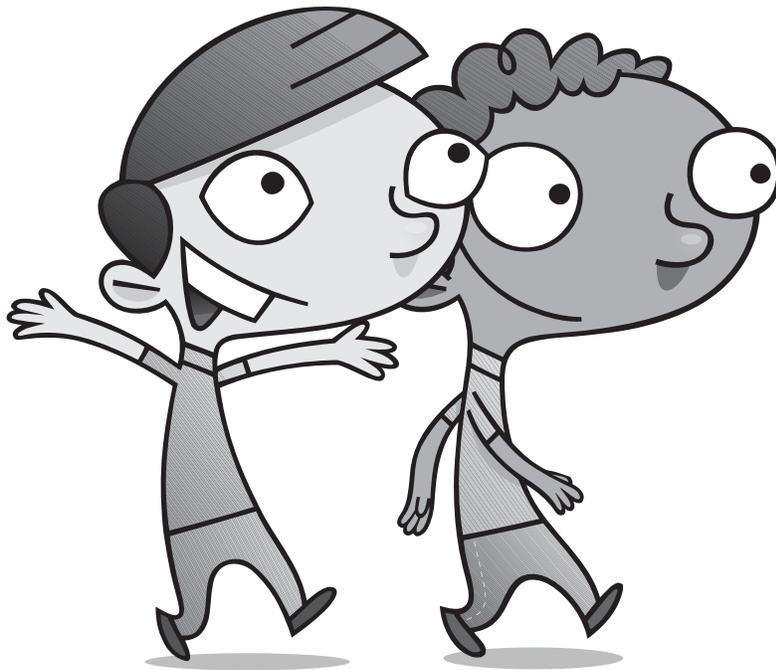
Additional symptoms that may or may not be present include lack of awareness of the problem, family history of fluency disorders, poor handwriting, confusing and disorganized language or conversational skills, temporary improvement when asked to “slow down” or “pay attention” to speech, misarticulations, poor intelligibility, social or vocational problems, distractibility, hyperactivity, auditory perceptual difficulties, learning disabilities, and apraxia (St. Louis, Raphael, Myers, & Bakker, 2003, ¶ 7).

### How Do I Treat Cluttering?

A speech-language pathologist can provide treatment for cluttering. The following are some ways to treat cluttering (St. Louis, last updated 2009, ¶ 7-9):

- Start treatment by encouraging the person to speak slower, allowing the person to “control” the rate of speech.

- Use visual aids such as a speedometer for monitoring the rate of speech—Keep speech rate below the “speed limit.”
- Begin with highly structured utterances such as “Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_.” Then, move toward a more typical flow of language and conversation.
- Have the person who clutters exaggerate stressed syllables in words and articulate all syllables. The goal is to have the individual learn to self-monitor his/her speech.
- Have the person who clutters listen to a disorganized speech sample and then listen to a sample of clear speech to increase awareness of the correct production.



#### Resources

Ramig, P. R., & Dodge, D. M. (2005). *The child and adolescent stuttering treatment and activity resource guide*. Canada: Thomson Delmar Learning.

St. Louis, K. O. (last updated 2009). *Cluttering: Some guidelines*. Retrieved April 6, 2009, from <http://www.stutteringhelp.org/Default.aspx?tabid=82>

St. Louis, K. O., Raphael, L.J., Myers, F.L., & Bakker, K. (2003). Cluttering updated. *The ASHA Leader*, pp. 4-5, 20-22.



Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) or call 1-800-277-8737. Click the links below to see the product description.

*Color Me Fluent®*

Ask for Item #BK-324

<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=BK324&lid=1E935D3A>

*Fluency River®*

Ask for Item #GB-235

<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=GB235&lid=D414D787>

*Focus on Fluency™*

Ask for Item #FCF-99

<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=FCF99&lid=2DF95853>

*Turtle Talk®*

Ask for Item #GB-137

<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=GB137&lid=EA136482>