

Fluency and the Environment

The following suggestions stress the importance of self-esteem, respect, structure, and harmony in your child's immediate environment. You may already do many of these things, or this may serve as a reminder of the many factors that may impact fluency.



1. See that your child has a full night of rest. This is very important for general health, as well as for speech. Sometimes speech fluency is less stable when the child is excessively tired.
2. Get down on your child's level to talk with him/her. Squat or sit so that you can be at your child's eye level.
3. Be a good listener. If you are involved in another activity, indicate a time when you can listen, read, play, or do an activity with him/her.
4. Compliment your child at least three times a day in addition to your normal daily praise. Tell your child frequently that you love him/her, and that he's a good buddy, fun companion, or interesting partner.
5. Let your child "overhear" discussions about him/her (*in a positive manner, of course*). Talk nicely about him/her when he/she is in the next room.
6. Try to arrange your schedule so that there is a minimum amount of stress associated with moving from one activity to another. Rushing around can often have a negative impact on speech fluency.
7. If your child has a sibling with whom he is in great competition, try to look for the differences in the children and play up each one's skills, abilities, and attributes. Schedule some time daily with your child. Make it quality time that is pleasant and nonjudgmental. If you have more than one child, schedule individual time with each child weekly.

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8. Increase your child's experiences so that he/she will have something exciting to talk about. Take him/her to a variety of places: zoo, mall, grocery store, farm, city, restaurant, nature trail, museum, theme park, etc.
9. When you are going somewhere with your child, walk with him/her, not ahead. Hold hands if he/she desires. By doing this, you are saying, "I want to be with you."
10. Your child should sense harmony, security, and love in the family. Minimize outbursts, temper tantrums, and arguments. Negotiation and compromise are critical for family peace.
11. Give your child choices frequently. Even little choices say to your child that he/she is valued. For example, *"Do you want to wear red socks or blue socks today?"* Also, include your child on decisions he/she may not be expecting. For example, *"Should we go for hamburgers or pizza?"*
12. Occasionally, ask the child if you can help him/her do something. *"Could I help you pick up your toys today?"* However, it is still important to encourage the child to do for himself or herself. If he/she can do it, he/she feels better. *"I'm big, I can do it."* Doing too much for a child may limit self-reliance and independence and may indirectly affect self-esteem, self-concept, and fluency.
13. As a parent, when you make a mistake, acknowledge it. *"Oops, I dropped the book."* Children often feel they are the only ones that make mistakes.
14. Be considerate and treat your child with respect. For example, don't turn his/her T.V. program off and turn yours on.
15. Parents should not interrupt children. Likewise, children should not interrupt parents. These "rules" should be kept. Lead by example.