

## Catching the Stutter

Catching the Stutter requires students to identify moments of stuttering as they occur (Dell, 1993; Murphy, 2002). It involves

having them close their hand whenever they stutter.



This activity increases children's awareness of their stuttering, and helps them to develop the self-monitoring skills they will need for using other stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing techniques (Reardon-Reeves & Yaruss, 2004).

Given that Catching the Stutter encourages students to acknowledge and accept their disfluency, it also begins the process of desensitization (Dell, 1993; Prins, 1997; Van Riper, 1973). This strategy is only practiced in the therapy room.

### *Catching the Stutter can be taught in the following way:*

1. Explain the rationale (described above and on page 7 of the Student Workbook).
2. Model Catching the Stutter.
  - » Hold your hand up (with fingers pointing upward) at shoulder height, about 12" in front of you. You can place your elbow on a table, if desired.
  - » As you read the brief passage on page 8 of the Student Workbook, periodically stutter on a word. Whenever you do so, close your hand to "catch" the disfluency, and signal that you have stuttered. Match the tension level in your hand with the tension of the stutter.
3. Have students describe what you are doing.

4. Repeat Step 2; however, tell students that this time you will occasionally stutter *without* closing your hand.
  - » Ask students to identify times that you stuttered, but failed to catch it. Remind students that increasing awareness of their speech will help them to catch, and ultimately change, moments of stuttering.
5. Have students read the same passage and catch any real moments of stuttering.
  - » Encourage them to try and match the tension level of their hand with the tension in their speech. (You may need to remind students to keep their hand open with fingers extended when they are not stuttering.)
  - » Point out times when students fail to catch a moment of stuttering. If they don't demonstrate any genuine stuttering, have them re-read the passage while intentionally stuttering on some words.
6. Model, and have students practice Catching the Stutter with additional reading passages.
7. After students have demonstrated proficiency catching their stuttering while reading, model the same skill during conversational speech.
8. Guide students as they practice Catching the Stutter during conversational speech within the therapy room.