

## About the Author

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**Fluency Card Games** was developed by Jennifer Preschern, M.A., CCC-SLP. She has master's degrees from Northwestern University in speech-language pathology and in learning disabilities. Jennifer is currently working as a speech-pathologist for an elementary school on the north shore of Chicago.

## Introduction

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I developed these card games to facilitate therapy for the emotional, physical, and cognitive aspects of most stuttering programs. The cards can be used as a supplement to any fluency program, including a speak more fluently, stutter more fluently, or an integrated approach. They can also be easily modified to use with students working on articulation or functional receptive and expressive language.

I hope these games help you provide a fun, safe, and comfortable environment for your students to talk about their feelings and practice new speech behaviors.

## Descriptions of Card Decks

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### Emotions Deck

The emotional component of stuttering therapy includes working on a child's attitudes and feelings. Therapy addresses a child's methods of coping with his speech difficulties as well as providing him with an opportunity to express his thoughts about being dysfluent. Using a counseling approach, the speech-language pathologist should help the student form constructive thoughts about himself and his speaking strengths and weaknesses.

The Emotions cards contain the following types of questions:

- Exploring personal positive feelings
- Exploring personal negative feelings
- Exploring feelings about stuttering
- Exploring positive feelings about speaking
- Exploring negative feelings about speaking
- Exploring how others react to stuttering

There are also several rating scale cards that allow a student to rate his feelings or beliefs.

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## Functional Communication Deck and Social Communication Deck

The Functional Communication cards and the Social Communication cards can be used to reduce the physical manifestations of dysfluent speech, including repetitions, prolongations, and air blocks.

One way to improve a student's fluency is through teaching him "easy speech" or ERA-SM (easy relaxed approach to speaking with smooth movement). Easy speech can be described as a modification process in which the student first practices saying the initial consonant of words with a slightly slower and more relaxed onset. Then the student says the remainder of the word or phrase at a normal rate and inflection. A new sentence or statement can initiate with another easy onset.

Helping students use easy speech can be done in a hierarchy, beginning with one word, progressing to sentences, and then to conversation. The cards in both of these decks provide practice with easy speech that follows this hierarchy. Each card contains three stimulus items. Item A gives students practice answering a question with a short phrase or one-word answer. Item B contains sentences and questions for the student to repeat as well as questions the student can answer with a one-sentence response. Item C presents stimulus items that give students practice at the conversation level. The speech-language pathologist should also model using easy speech at each level.

The Functional Communication cards include common situations that occur in school and the community, such as school lunch procedures, likes and dislikes related to school, describing school events, ordering food at restaurants, asking for directions, and taking the bus.

The Social Communication cards include common situations with same-age peers such as initiating conversations, phone etiquette, and descriptions of movies. They also allow the student to practice giving personal information such as likes and dislikes, after-school activities, and family information.

The Functional Communication cards and the Social Communication cards contain the following types of questions:

- Relating narratives
- Describing locations
- Describing people/things
- Describing how to do something
- Persuading
- Practicing conversation

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## Stuttering Awareness Deck

The cognitive aspects of therapy include helping the child develop an awareness of stuttering and its characteristics. Speech-language pathologists can help students improve their awareness of what helps or hinders their speaking abilities. They can also improve students' awareness of the secondary characteristics of stuttering, such as eye blinking, hand gestures, or body movements.

Therapy may also include negative practice, in which the child or clinician stutters on purpose. The focus is on observing places of tension in the person's facial musculature and body. Negative practice also reinforces the idea that some stuttering can be acceptable.

Negative practice with pull out occurs when the child or clinician stutters on purpose and then eases the tension through the use of a pause and relaxation, followed by an easy onset. Pull out can empower a child to feel in control of his fluency. It also provides the child with a tool to use during a moment of dysfluency.

The Stuttering Awareness cards contain the following types of questions:

- Describing fluent speech/ways to be fluent
- Analyzing stuttering and secondary behaviors
- Negative practice
- Negative practice with pull out
- Describing the therapy process
- Reactions to stuttering/dealing with teasing

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## How to Use These Card Decks

In the top left corner of each card is a number 1-6 that students use to play the games. Play with one deck at a time, or select cards from different decks to create a customized card deck. Use the cards to play these and other games with your students.

### Go Fish

Deal five cards to each player. Place the stack of remaining cards facedown in a pile within reach of all players. Students ask other players for cards that match the numbers on their cards (e.g., "Do you have a 3?"). In order to collect another player's card and lay down a pair, the student must answer the question or follow the direction on each card. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game is the winner.

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## **War**

Divide the deck evenly between two players. Have each player place his deck of cards facedown in front of him. When play begins, each player simultaneously flips over one card and places it faceup on the table. The student who turns over the card with the highest point value wins the pair, but he must first answer the question or follow the direction on each card in order to collect it. In case of a tie (the point value on both cards is the same), have each player answer the question or follow the direction on his own card and keep it.

## **More Points**

Divide the deck evenly among any number of players. Have each player place his deck of cards facedown in front of him. Have one player at a time turn over a card and answer the question or follow the direction to earn the number of points on the card. The player with the highest number of points at the end of a predetermined amount of time is the winner.

## **In Between**

Place two cards face up on the table next to each other and identify their point values. The first player has to guess if the next card you turn over will have a point value that falls between those two numbers, is lower than the smallest number, or is higher than the biggest number. If the player is correct, he answers the question or follows the direction on the card he “won” in order to keep it. The dealer then turns up two more cards and play proceeds to the next player. The first player to collect 10 cards is the winner, or the player with the most cards at the end of a predetermined amount of time is the winner.

## **Pyramid**

The goal of this game is to collect one card of every number (1-6). Deal each player six cards and place the remaining cards in a facedown pile on the table. The first player may either draw a card from the pile or ask another player for a card with a particular number on it. If this player has the card, he must give it up. If he does not, then the player must draw a card from the pile. In either case, the player should then put one of his cards in a discard pile so that he never has more than six cards in his hand at one time.

Players may place the cards they are collecting face up on the table at any time during their turns. However, a player must answer the question or follow the direction on each card before he may lay it down. Once a card is placed on the table, it is “protected” and may not be taken by other players. The first person to collect one card of every number (1-6) is the winner.

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## Earn 20

The goal of this game is to collect cards that equal 20 points. This can be done with any combination of cards and with as many or as few cards as necessary. For instance, cards numbered 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 1 and 4, 6, 3, 3, 2, 1, 1 equal 20 points.

Deal each player five cards and place the remaining cards facedown on the table in a pile. Turn over the top card and place it next to the pile. This is the discard pile. On each turn, a player can do one of four things:

- draw a card from the new pile
- take the top card from the discard pile
- remove a card from his hand by placing it on the discard pile
- ask another player for a card with a specific point value

The player must answer the question or follow the direction on the card being acted upon. The first player to collect cards that equal 20 points is the winner.

## Variations

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You'll find lots of other uses for these cards, including:

- initiate a therapy session to frame the discussion for the day
- conclude a therapy session to allow the student to discuss feelings that arose during the session
- use as stimulus items with board games
- supplement other language areas, such as answering questions, expressive language skills, and formulating oral ideas prior to writing