



## A WORKBOOK FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN WHO STUTTER



Shinji Ito  
Executive director  
Japan Stuttering Project

Japan Stuttering Project is a self-help group of adults who stutter. They are engaged in various activities including a summer camp for children who stutter and their parents and publication projects, as well as holding weekly meetings.

In Japan there have been very few comprehensive guidebooks for school children who stutter. On August 31, 2010, a workbook for children who stutter was published by the speech therapists working for public schools, hospitals and special centers. The book contains many exercises designed for school children.

The book also shows various approaches which help children to deal with their stuttering based on the recognition of the following three realities:

1. Many people continue to stutter even after undergoing therapy.
2. There is no effective approach that leads to complete recovery from stuttering anywhere in the world.

3. The severity of the stuttering varies greatly between individuals. There are some people who do not stutter severely but are affected by the symptoms, while there are others who stutter severely but are less affected and are leading meaningful lives.

Based on these realities we have been exploring ways to live with stuttering for more than forty years, and we choose not to spend a huge amount of energy to cure, improve and control the symptoms. The workbook is our message to school children based on the experiences of adults and children who stutter. It aims to give them ideas about how they can face and deal with their stuttering.

The book also introduces the experiences of Shinji Ito, Charles Van Riper, Scatman John, and Joseph G. Sheehan as well as approaches to stuttering used in the United States and Australia. The exercises we invented to help children to deal with stuttering focus on the following areas.

Exploring with children what stuttering is and its causes

In order to think about the issues involved with stuttering children make cubic shapes with wood blocs or paper and clay to illustrate the 'language relation figure' invented by Wendell Johnson. Also, they make their stuttering icebergs following the concept of Dr. Sheehan's iceberg theory.

Children use a checklist to understand their interpersonal relationships, emotions, thoughts and their avoidance behavior, to go beyond simply focusing on their stuttering symptoms.

The exercises help children to develop their 'social interest,' which is one of the key concepts of Adler's psychology. The exercises focus on developing communicative skills.

Vocal and pronunciation exercise of Japanese language

The book has been reviewed by major newspapers and educational journals. The initial print run of the book was 2,500 copies and sold out within a month of its debut and so far an additional 2,500 copies have been published.