

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CORNER

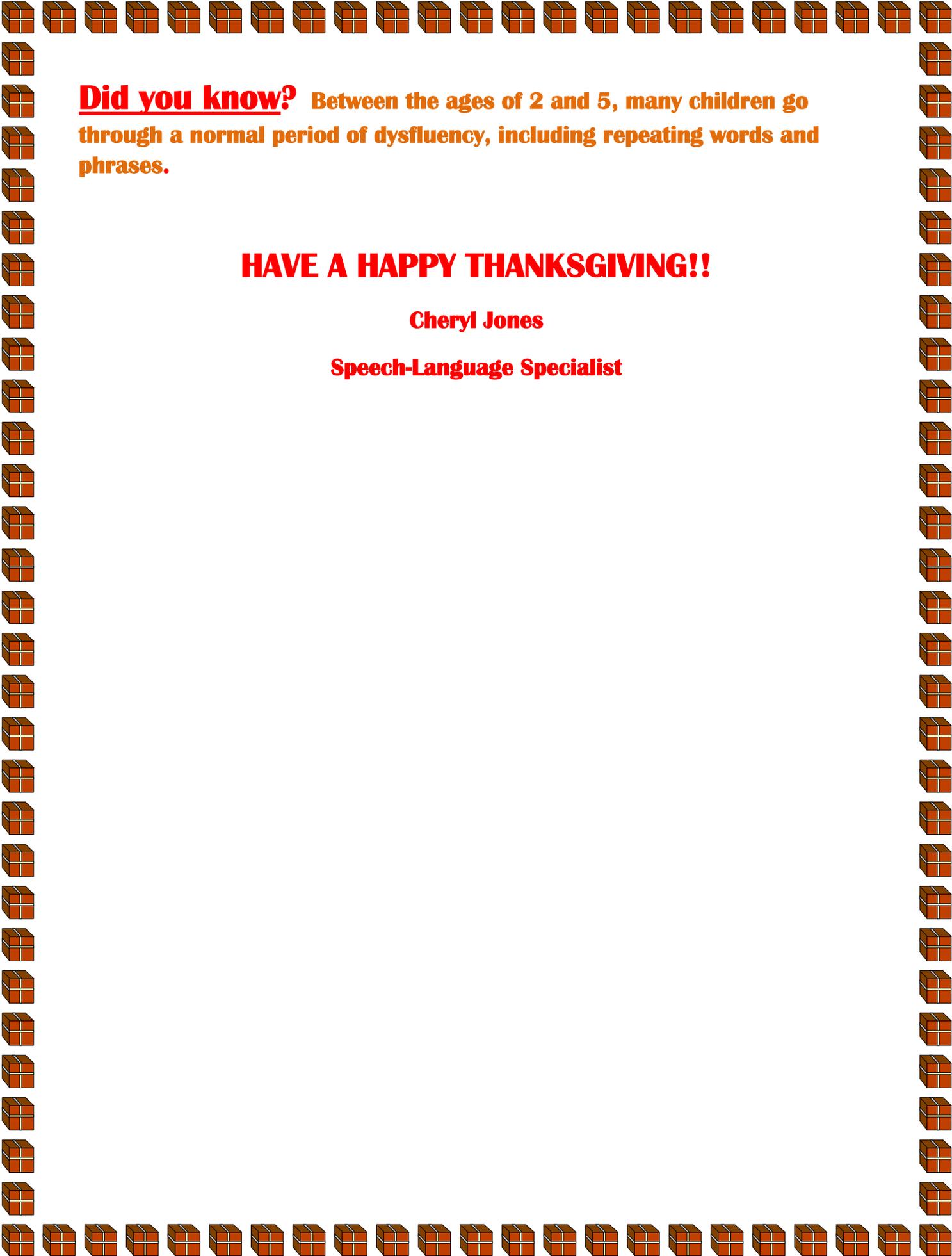
NOVEMBER NEWS BRIEF

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: **STUTTERING**

Recently this speech impairment has received national attention after a college student reported that his professor told him not to speak in class because it took too much of the class's time for him to finish his thought due to his stuttering. People at many levels expressed outrage at this professor's demeaning treatment of this student. The question is then, "How should we handle stuttering when it occurs in our classroom and how is it best treated?"

Students who stutter want to be treated like everyone else. They want to participate in conversations in school and hang out with their friends at home. Teachers can be role models for their classes by demonstrating the correct way for a stuttering student to be treated. Stutterers should be allowed to finish their sentences without interruption. Eye contact should be maintained and acknowledgement should be made to the student that he has been understood. When peers and teachers don't allow a stutterer to finish their thoughts, the student's self-esteem can suffer. They may feel incapable of talking without interruption. A stuttering student should never be put on the spot in the classroom unless he volunteers an answer. Being called on in front of a classroom to answer a question or to read aloud can put too much pressure on the stutterer. It is better to allow him to speak on his own terms.

Finally, many people want to know what causes stuttering but the answer is not clear cut. There are usually several factors that can contribute to dysfluent speech. These include slow speech and language development; an immature nervous system; an early trauma in the home that upset the child; or a presence of generalized impulsivity and high levels of sensitivity. Whatever the cause, stuttering is a disability that can have a severe impact on a student's life. We must approach it with compassion, empathy and patience.



Did you know? Between the ages of 2 and 5, many children go through a normal period of dysfluency, including repeating words and phrases.

HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

Cheryl Jones

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