

# Stammering

## How to help fluency of speech in young children

During the early years language is developing very rapidly, and children will often hesitate; repeat sounds and words; or maybe stop and start a whole sentence over again two or three times.

5% of children will do this more frequently, and while most will grow out of it, 1 in 5 of these children may continue to stammer.

Stammering and stuttering are words that mean a child has difficulty getting out the words they want to say. You may hear breaks in speech or they may appear to struggle; and this can:

- last for weeks or months
- happen only very occasionally
- come and go



## How you can help your child

Be interested in **what** the child is telling you, not in **how** it's being said.

Be patient and encouraging and maintain eye contact. Show that you are listening.

Give the child plenty of time to talk.

During conversation ensure that each child gets his / her "turn".

**Don't** tell the child to slow down, think or take a deep breath and start again. It does not help.

Instead, speak more slowly yourself.

Try not to finish off his / her sentences.

Make the most of opportunities to build a child's confidence and gives lots of praise.

Avoid asking too many questions, as you may unwittingly be creating pressure.

Set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day when you can give your undivided attention to your child. This quiet, calm time can be a confidence builder for younger children.

If you are concerned, contact your local Speech and Language Therapy Department after watching the You Tube Video '7 Tips for Talking with a Child Who Stutters'.