

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, 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'.

For more on these hints and tips, scan this QR code to watch a video.

