

## Helping your child who stammers

It can be difficult to see your child getting stuck when they are speaking. There are things that you can do to make things easier.

### Things that can help

- Focus on what your child is saying, rather than how they are saying it.
- Allow time for your child to finish speaking in their own time.
- Let your child say the words themselves.
- Keep natural eye contact with your child. Coming down to their level can also help.
- Slow down your own pace of talking and pause more often.
- Encourage turn-taking to reduce interrupting.

### Talking about stammering

- Be mindful of the words you use to talk about your child's speech. Talk about stammering 'more' or 'less', rather than speech being 'good' or 'bad'.
- If your child is aware of the stammer, you can acknowledge stammering in a relaxed way. You could try "That was a tricky sentence. You did a good job saying all of those words". Being open about it shows your child that stammering is okay.

### Remember to

- Avoid telling your child to slow down, think, breathe etc. Adults find it hard to change the way they speak and so it will be much harder for your child. Your child may be able to speak more slowly for a moment or two, but it is unlikely that it will last long, and you might both end up feeling more frustrated.
- Avoid asking your child to say stammered words again. The word may flow more easily when your child repeats it, but this is unlikely to help them to say the same word the next time it comes up.
- Avoid speaking for your child. Having someone else speak for them takes away opportunity to build confidence in speaking.

### Other things to try

- Try to arrange some 1:1 time during the day when your child can have your full attention and talk in a calm atmosphere.
- Praise your child when you notice them using good communication skills, regardless of whether they stammered or not.

### Websites and videos with more information

Stamma [www.stamma.org](http://www.stamma.org)

Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children <https://michaelpalincentreforstammering.org/>

Action for Stammering Children <https://actionforstammeringchildren.org/>

<https://actionforstammeringchildren.org/get-involved/stambassadors/>

Video: 7 top tips for talking with the child who stutters

'I have a stammer' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aWSkk0UTH0>