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Children's Speech and Language Therapy Team Dysfluency/Stammering

A stammer can involve: repetition of sounds or words, lengthening sounds, getting completely stuck on sounds and/or making involuntary movements with the body. You might hear the words 'stammer', 'stutter' or 'dysfluency'. These all mean the same thing.

Top Tips

- Wait for your child to finish talking, even if it takes a long time.
- Listen to what your child says rather than how they say it.
- Reduce the number of questions you ask.
- Questions can place extra pressure on your child.
- Follow your child's lead. Let them talk about something they are interested in.
- Slow down your own rate of talking. This helps to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere for speaking.



Special Time

Create 5 minutes of one to one 'Special Time' every day with your child e.g. Playing a game, reading a book, having a chat. During this time, try to focus the 'top tips' above.

Specific praise

Build on your child's self-esteem by giving specific praise for all the things they can do well, e.g. 'thank you for tidying up the toys, you're very good at helping to tidy up'.

Take turns

Make sure everyone at home gets their chance to talk. You could introduce a 'talking teddy' (or something else you can find in the house). Make it a rule that when someone is holding that object, it is their turn to talk and everyone else has to listen.

Responding to the Stammer

- Try not to draw attention to the stammer, especially if your child is unaware of it.
- If your child is aware that they are stammering then you can acknowledge it and talk about their difficulties using child-friendly terminology, e.g. 'bumpy talking'.
- With older children (juniors and above) you can begin to introduce the word 'stammer'.
- Always be supportive and reassuring.



Useful websites

www.stamma.org - British Stammering Association. Offering advice and support to parents and young people.
<https://actionforstammeringchildren.org/>
- Action for Stammering Children. Charity offering advice and support.

