



Stammering

For parents with children under five

Normal non-fluency

Many children between the ages of two to five go through a stage of 'stuttering' or 'stammering' when they speak. They may hesitate, repeat sounds or words or get stuck. This stage of development usually passes.

Children often stutter more when they are tired, excited or upset.

It usually happens when they go through a change in their life such as starting pre-school or nursery or when they have a burst in their language development such as learning new words or sentences.

Children usually go on to develop speech normally and do not need intervention.

It can be very worrying for parents when their child stutters when they talk but there are things you can do to help this stage of language development pass.

What can you do to help?

- **Slow down your speech** when you are talking. This helps your child slow down and it's much more effective than telling the child to slow down.
- Don't tell them to calm down and take a deep breath. This draws attention to the stutter and makes it more of a problem.
- Don't fill in for the child or interrupt. Take turns when talking.
- Try not to ask too many questions at once. Answering questions is often difficult for children. You can help by reducing the number of questions and giving your child plenty of time to reply.
- Try to be patient and wait for your child to finish talking. Try not to let your child feel rushed. Don't let frustration show in your face or voice. Give your child eye contact while you are waiting.

- Remember to listen to what your child is saying, not how they are saying it.
- Listen to your child. Listening is an important part of communication. It's harder for a child to communicate if someone is only half listening.
- Get eye contact when talking to your child. Get down to their level so you are face to face.
- Don't label your child as a stammerer or use emotional words to describe the child's speech such as good or bad speech.
- Help to build your child's self-esteem by helping them make a contribution to family life. This could be an easy job around the house that the child takes responsibility for or helping with making dinner. Make sure the job is easily achieved and praise your child every time it's done.
- Encourage your child to talk about any positive or negative feelings.

If you would like to talk to someone about your child's communication you can contact the Early Communication Team through your local children's centre for information and advice.

Childrens centre details

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SureStart

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