

Stammering – Parent/Carer Advice Sheet

Stammering (**also referred to as stuttering or dysfluency**) occurs in all parts of the world, across all cultures, religions and socio-economic groups. Stammering can take many different forms and each person who has a stammer shows slightly different features. There is no one known cause of stammering but there are some known facts:

- 5% of children under 5 years have dysfluent speech. Of these – 1% will go on to stammer in late childhood
- More boys than girls stammer (4:1)
- There is typically a family link

Characteristics of a stammer include:

- Repetition(s) of words, parts of words or sounds **e.g. k-k-kitten / kit-kit-kitten / kitten - kitten**
- Prolongation of a sound **e.g. kiiiiiiiiiiiiitten**
- Blocking of a sound, where the mouth is positioned, but no sound comes out **e.g.kitten**
- There may be facial expressions, body movements or unusual breathing patterns that accompany these disturbances in speech rhythm. Children may also show signs of distress/ embarrassment or reluctance to speak

Strategies to help your child who stammers

- **Listen** carefully to what your child has to say and **wait** for them to finish
- Show you are listening by **looking** at your child
- Focus on **what** your child is trying to say rather than how he/she is saying it
- If your child is aware of their difficulty, **acknowledge** that something was 'a bit tricky to say', **praise** them for 'good talking' or 'trying hard' and ask **what helps them**.
- Give your child **extra time** to speak, without interruptions
- **Reduce** the number of **questions** that you ask your child to reduce any pressure they may feel
- Praise your child for the things he or she does well (not related to talking) as this can help build confidence
- **Slow down your own rate of talking**, as this helps to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere for speaking
- **Try to arrange some time during the day** - perhaps five minutes - when your child can have your undivided attention in a calm and relaxed atmosphere
- Stammering and a fast pace of life don't always go well together. Some routine and structure in daily life can be helpful

Useful websites and resources

<http://www.stammeringcentre.org/>

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