

Supporting young children that stammer

Children's Speech and Language Therapy
Acute and Community AHPs

Introduction

This leaflet is produced for parents/carers who may have concerns about their child stammering.

What is stammering?

- Stammering is also known as stuttering or dysfluency. They all mean the same thing.
- Typically, some children will start to stammer between the ages of 2 and 4, when their language skills are developing very quickly. It is estimated that up to 5% of all children will stammer at some point with approximately 1% persisting stammering into adulthood.
- Stammering can run in families.
- Everybody's stammer is different:
 - Some children may repeat parts of words or whole words.
 - Some may stretch out the words they are saying.
 - They may block on a word, where no sound comes out at all.
- Most children are unaware that they are stammering. However, for some children they may show frustration, become anxious or withdrawn.
- You may notice your child's stammer changes over time or that they may have times where their talking is more fluent. You may also notice that they stammer more when they are tired, feeling excited or nervous or when asked lots of questions.
- In the pre-school years, equal numbers of boys and girls stammer. However, boys are approximately 4-5 times more likely than girls to continue stammering.

How can I help?

Parents do not cause stammering and there are lots of things that you can do to support your child's talking:

- **Time** – Give your child time. This shows them that you are interested in what they are saying rather than how they are saying it. Lots of parents will also try to help their child by encouraging them to 'take a breath' or 'start again'. However, this can interrupt the flow of conversation and may increase your child's awareness of their stammer. It can also be frustrating for them. Being patient and allowing them the time to talk may therefore be more beneficial.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

- **Slow down your talking** – sometimes children can talk very quickly and this can interrupt their flow of speech. However, telling a child to ‘slow down’ often isn’t helpful. Instead, try slowing down your own rate of speech when talking to your child. This will model a slower, less rushed way of talking and makes it more likely that your child will start to do this too.
- **Reduce questions** – try to reduce the number of questions that you ask. Asking lots of questions can put more pressure on speaking. For example, during play you could try asking just one question for every three-four comments that you make. Remember to allow plenty of time for your child to respond once you have asked a question.
- **Praise** – praise your child for the things they do well. This will help to continue building their self-esteem and confidence. This is particularly important if your child is aware of their stammer.
- **Routines** – try to have a consistent routine for your child as research shows things such as tiredness can affect fluency.
- **Turn-taking** – if there are other siblings at home then the child who stammers may sometimes feel that they have to compete to tell you something. Encourage everyone to take turns with talking to help support a less-rushed way of speaking.
- **Reassure** – if your child is aware of their stammer or becoming frustrated by it then acknowledge it with reassurance. You could say something like ‘that sounded bumpy - don’t worry, there’s no rush’. This can be reassuring for the child and lets them know that you’re not bothered by it.

Remember, you know your child best and will likely be doing some of the things above already. If there are things on the list that you do already, see if you can do more of them. Using some of these strategies in special time (see below) can also help.

What is special time?

- Special time is 5 minutes of the day where you play with your child, giving them your undivided attention
- Allow your child to select an activity, toy or game. This should not be anything too lively as research shows when children are excited that they typically speak quicker, which can affect their fluency
- When you have chosen what to do go to a room where you will have minimal distractions and not be disturbed. During this time, focus your attention on what your child is saying rather than how they are saying it
- Try to use one or two of the strategies listed above.

Remember...

- Your child is not stammering on purpose and may not even be aware that they are doing it.
- Tell everyone that sees your child how to help. Give them a copy of this leaflet to read.

Further Information

Further information to support your child can also be found in these leaflets available at <https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy-children/>

- Attention and Listening
- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Speech Sounds
- Social Communication

All are available on the website.

How do I get in touch?

Speech and Language Therapy Service

The Gem Centre

Neachells Lane

Wednesfield

Wolverhampton

WV11 3PG

Telephone: 01902 444363

E-mail: rwh-tr.Speech-And-Language@nhs.net

Website:

<https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy/>



English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。