

# Dysfluency Advice Sheet

## What is stammering?

- Repetition of words (e.g. and-and-and) or parts of words (e.g. c-c-come or ca-ca-car).
- Prolonging of sounds e.g. sssometimes.
- Blocking (where your mouth is in the right place but no sound comes out).
- A combination of these things.

## Some children might develop 'secondary behaviours' such as:

- Extra body movements (e.g. stamping feet, tapping fingers).
- Disrupted breathing (e.g. holding or exaggerating breath).

## Top Tips

1. Try to maintain natural eye-contact when your child is finding talking difficult.
2. Be supportive and encouraging. Don't ask your child to slow down or take a deep breath as they will not find this helpful.
3. Encourage turn taking when talking. Don't interrupt or rush your child and don't finish sentences for them.
4. Create a relaxed environment for them to practice their talking by using lots of comments. Limit the number of questions you ask as this adds pressure for your child to speak.
5. Slow down the rate of your own speech to help model this to your child. Do this by adding natural pauses and use short and simple language.
6. Follow your child's lead with communication- try to talk about things they like and what they are doing in the moment.
7. Reassure and praise your child without drawing attention to the stammer e.g. say things such as, "talking can be tricky, you're doing really well!" Avoid using language such as "your stammer has been good today" as this implies it has been "bad" on another day.
8. Children can develop avoidance behaviours such as avoiding saying certain words or sounds, hiding their stammer by 'forgetting' what they are saying or avoiding situations altogether. Keep an eye out for these signs and discuss them with a Speech and Language Therapist if you are worried.

## Where to find out more

- The British Stammering Association (STAMMA)  
[Welcome to Stamma | STAMMA](#)
- The NHS website [Stammering - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- The Communication Trust [Stammering Factsheet - NEW \(ican.org.uk\)](http://ican.org.uk)
- Paediatric CTLD Speech and Language Therapy 0191 210 6868

## Things to remember

- Stammering might also be referred to as stuttering, dysfluency or 'bumpy'. These all mean the same thing!
- Lots of children are 'bumpy' when learning language – about 5% of children will go through a stammering phase.
- The severity of a stammer does not indicate a poorer outcome.
- We still don't know what causes a stammer and it's important to remember that it is different for everyone.
- Consider your child's awareness. Stammering can impact how we think about ourselves and our confidence. Be careful not to draw attention to a stammer, especially if it is not bothering them! If they are aware, talk about it in a reassuring way and try to avoid labelling it as a 'stammer'. Use language such as 'bumpy' instead.