

Stammering: Advice For Teaching Staff

THE FACTS

Stammering is a common condition that can affect children, usually between the ages 2 and 5 years. Some children will start to stammer after 5 years.

THE CAUSES

The causes of stammering remain unclear, however recent research indicates that stammering is a neurological condition related to the part of the brain where speech develops.

GENETICS?

Stammering also often runs in families – around 60% of people who stammer have a relative who stammers or used to stammer.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?



LISTEN AND WAIT

Listen to what the child is saying, and **wait** until they have finished



DON'T SPEAK FOR THEM

Try **not** to say the word for them, or finish off the sentence for them. This also applies to other pupils, try and **discourage others** from speaking for them



KEEP CALM

Keep calm so that they do not feel under pressure to speak more quickly or feel hurried to finish their sentence.

DON'T ASK THEM TO SLOW DOWN

Don't ask them to slow down or take a deep breath, as this will only serve to draw attention to the stammer and **put them under more pressure**



MODEL

Model **thinking time** in the classroom, and encourage all the children in the classroom to do this also.

SLOW DOWN

Slow down **your own rate of speech** to encourage a relaxed atmosphere. Pausing for 2 seconds before replying to them will help

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WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

OFFER PRAISE

Praise them **specifically** at least once a day, for example, being kind to a peer. This is to maintain high levels of self-esteem, which is an area that can be affected through stammering



SPEAKING OR READING ALOUD IN CLASS



REDUCE QUESTIONS

Keep your questions **simple** and **don't ask too many** questions at one time

BODY LANGUAGE

Children may pick up on **non-verbal behaviours** such as fidgeting, repeated nodding or doing something else at the same time as listening to them. These behaviours may be interpreted as signs to hurry up



ENCOURAGE TURN TAKING

Ensure they **take a turn** in activities. Simple strategies like having to **put a hand up** to a take turns let them know that they will have a turn and others will be quiet when they speak



INCLUSION

Do not exclude the child from speaking activities, but arrange matters according to their needs

Any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Speech and Language Therapy department on 0161 366 2050

The following situations usually reduce stammering:

- o When speaking or reading in unison.
- o When speaking or reading with just one listener or within a small group.
- o When speech is not the sole factor, but is associated with some other activity.
- o Speaking when there is no time pressure to complete the utterance quickly.

