

DEVELOPMENT OF STAMMERING

EARLY DYSFLUENCY

- Awareness** Child/Young person unaware/unconcerned.
- Stammer** Dysfluencies - mild, unhurried, lacking tension or struggle and usually consists of repetitions of phrases and whole words.
- Avoidance** Child/Young person does not avoid words or situations.

BORDERLINE STAMMERING

- Awareness** Child/Young person has some awareness/some concern, usually when stammering.
- Stammer** Stammers may be tense, hurried. May be prolongations or blocks as well as repetitions of phrases and sounds.
- Avoidance** Child/Young person may occasionally avoid words or situations.

CONFIRMED STAMMERING

- Awareness** Child/Young person is aware and may think about stammering a lot of the time.
- Stammer** Stammers may be very tense, hard attack on words and last several seconds - or may be hidden so that there is less actual stammering and the symptoms may 'go underground' affecting behaviour.
- Avoidance** Child/Young person may avoid a great deal - change words, avoid situations e.g. the phone, groups, may not make friends, may choose non-speaking subjects at school.

HOW TO REFER A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON WHO STAMMERS

- For teachers of pre-school aged or early school-aged children who may not be aware of their fluency difficulties, you should discuss the referral via the Staged Intervention Process. Consent must be sought from the child's parents or carers to refer to Speech and Language Therapy.
- For teachers who are concerned about an older school aged child or a young person's fluency, it is helpful to discuss this with the child or young person in order to determine their level of concern. In some cases, there may be signs of overt stammering but minimal or no signs of frustration or avoidance from the child or young person. In this situation, it is

advised to discuss with the older school aged child or young person whether a referral to Speech and Language therapy would be helpful at this stage or not. Again if a teacher notices signs of stammering in class and the child or young person is showing signs of frustration and upset, then it is best for the teacher, via the Staged Intervention Process to discuss with the child or young person and their parents/carers whether a referral to Speech and Language Therapy has been already been considered and whether this would be of benefit.

- Across the city referrals can be made via the Staged Intervention Process, by sending in an appropriate referral form to each locality or by contacting the Team Leaders in each area base:

North East **Speech and Language Therapy**,
Community Health Partnership Offices,
Stobhill Hospital,
300 Balgrayhill Road, G21 3UR
Phone 0141 201 3399

North West **Speech and Language Therapy**,
West Centre, 60 Kinfauns Drive, G15 7TS
Phone 0141 211 6180

South **Speech and Language Therapy**,
Southbank Child Development Centre,
207 Old Rutherglen Road, G5 0RE
Phone 0141 201 0961

Speech and Language Therapy,
Pollok Health Centre,
21 Cowglen Road, G53 6EQ
Phone 0141 531 6843

LINKS WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST

Basic Information

www.stammering.org/help-information/professionals-and-business/teachers/teachers-basic-information

Early Years

www.stammering.org/help-information/professionals-and-business/teachers/our-website-early-years-workers

Primary

www.stammeringineducation.net/scotland/primary

Secondary

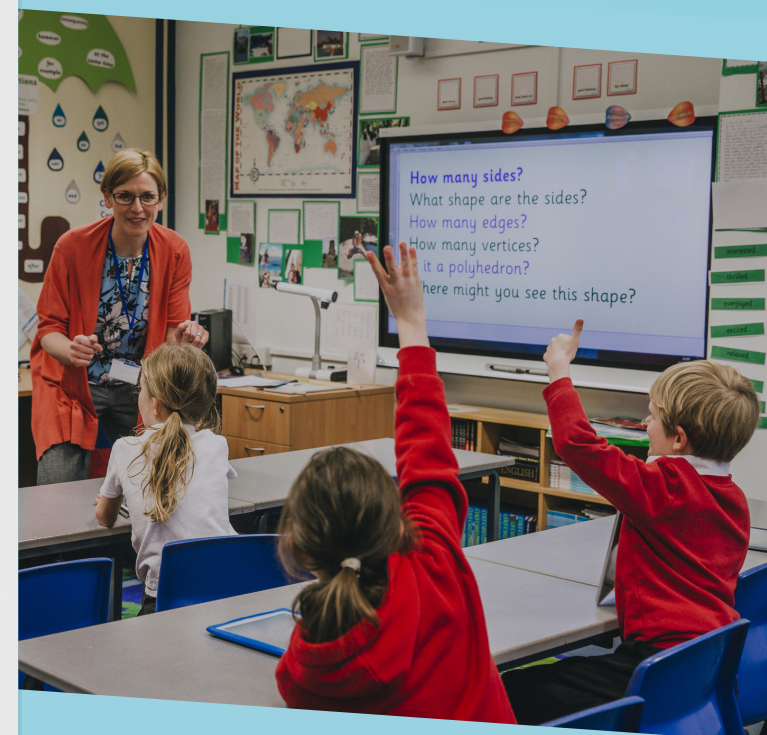
www.stammeringineducation.net/scotland/secondary

For Parents/Carers

expertparent.stammering.org

STAMMERING GUIDANCE

within Education Services



STAMMERING

- Disrupts the forward flow of speech with repetition, prolonging or blocking of words and sounds with possible facial tension and extra body movement. The pitch, tone and volume of the voice may be altered.
- Has no single cause, although there may be a genetic link. There is no single or definite cure and there is no single best strategy for supporting children/young people. Current research indicates that the cause of stammering has a physiological basis in the brain structure.
- Is found in every culture and language at an incidence of about 1% of the adult population and is not linked with ability or personality profiles.
- Is usually made worse by stress and anxiety and can come and go, even in the same conversation.
- Usually starts between two and five years and early intervention close to onset by a Speech and Language Therapist gives the best chance of recovery. It is thought that about 1 in 80 children of school age do stammer, but with modern therapy approaches leading to recovery for young children this number should continue to fall.

WHEN A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON STAMMERS

- Aim to build self-esteem so the child/young person manages his/her speaking with confidence, even when stammering severely.
- Ensure that the other children/young people are supportive in their talking, listening and behaviour.
- Give time to finish, and do not interrupt or finish off words.
- Listen attentively, and echo back some content so that the child/young person feels that **what** he/she said is more important than **how** he/she said it.
- Maintain normal eye contact and do not signal impatience. For example, avoid frequently nodding; looking at a watch or surreptitiously getting on with another task while the child/young person is speaking.
- Slow your own speech with natural pauses, demonstrating that there is no need to rush.

- If the child/young person is aware of their stammer, talk regularly with the child/young person to discuss what helps him/her and how to make speaking tasks in class easier.

MONITOR FOR UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Children/Young people who stammer have the same range of abilities and personality traits as children/young people who do not. It is easy to underestimate the ability of a child/young person who stammers as he/she may not always be able to express his thoughts and ideas. Teachers should **track** achievement in relationship to the **potential** of the child/young person, using whatever processes/systems are favoured in their school. Remember that just because a child/young person does not appear able to talk, it does not mean that he/she does not understand.

WHAT TEACHERS NOTICE

When a child/young person stammers teachers have observed:

- a) **Overt behaviours by the child/young person**
 - Appearing worried and anxious to rush away.
 - Blocking on a word or a sound, and trying to force it out.
 - Changing words to an easier one.
 - Clenching hands, tensing facial muscles.
 - Coughing.
 - Giving abrupt answers.
 - Getting out of breath.
 - Losing eye contact.
 - Moving head.
 - Prolonging sounds.
 - Pronouncing words differently.
 - Putting hands over or around the mouth.
 - Repeating words and sounds.
 - Seeming tense and anxious.
 - Speaking in a funny voice, such as a baby voice.
 - Speaking more quietly, or sometimes more loudly.
 - Talking when they feel able to speak so that they may interrupt or call out in class and seem to be rude.
- Using a filler word such as, “like”, “and”, “y’know”, “sort of”, to act as a run in to the speaking.

b) Covert behaviours by the child/young person

- Avoiding talking and getting out of situations, where talking is expected.
- Behaving in ways that may cover up the stammer: being quiet and hardworking, being difficult, and even trying to dominate other children/young people.
- Compromising on what they would like to do or say and seeing situations as an exposure of their stammering.
- Judging opportunities solely in terms of their stammer: for example school trips, visits to friends’ houses, and then deciding to avoid them.
- Planning ahead in their talking so that they are continually worrying about choice of words.
- Talking so quietly that you cannot hear what is said.
- Worrying about friendships, simple social demands such as buying sweets, paying bus fares, telephoning, and feeling generally worried about what is coming next.

TEASING AND BULLYING

Children/Young people who stammer do worry about this and parents/carers are understandably concerned. Glasgow schools follow policies to prevent bullying (www.goglasgow.org.uk/pages/show/576) and parents/carers and children/young people are encouraged to report any concerns as soon as possible. All establishments are expected to have their own anti-bullying policy which should be in line with both the National Approach and Education Services guidelines. Every child/young person needs to feel able to safely approach the teacher with a problem. However, children/young people who stammer may have problems talking to their teacher about such an emotional issue and can be helped by strategies which allow them to give information in writing e.g. a worry box, etc. Strategies to prevent bullying will be incorporated in the health and wellbeing curriculum that emphasises the diversity of the human family. In some schools, children/young people who feel different are encouraged to give a short talk to the class to create some empathy with their feelings. If a child/young person who stammers has the confidence to do this with support that can be helpful. It is advisable for the teacher to consult with the parent/carer and therapist before considering an approach to the child/young person.