



Helping a Pre-School Child Whose Speech is Non-Fluent

Some children, when they are learning to talk, can stumble over words/pause and start again etc. This can sound like a stammer. Between the ages of two and five years it is normal for a child to repeat words and phrases or hesitate while they are thinking of what they are trying to say. Many children will become more fluent as they get older but others can continue to get stuck and find talking difficult.



It is important to seek advice and information on how to help as soon as you notice your child becoming non-fluent.

Here are some ideas that may help:

- Listen to what your child is saying rather than how they are saying it.
- Offer your child some words of reassurance e.g. 'that was a tricky word' or 'everyone gets stuck with their talking sometimes'. Talk to them about their speech in a supportive, positive manner- this will not make your child's talking worse.
- Do not talk about their speech in front of them in a negative way or refer to your child as a stammerer.
- There are strategies that you can use, that can be helpful, e.g. slowing down your speech, using shorter sentences and more frequent pauses.
- Do not interrupt or finish sentences off for your child.
- Give your child plenty of time to speak, try not to rush them.
- If your child is competing with brothers and sisters for your attention, make sure that they all get their turn and if possible have some one-to-one time with you.
- Build up your child's confidence by praising their behaviour when they do things well e.g. you are very good at drawing – that's a great picture.
- Some children's fluency is affected by factors such as their moods, your moods, time of day, stress, excitement etc. Understanding these things will help to spot any patterns. Sometimes there is no pattern.
- Try not to put your child into a difficult speaking situation i.e. making the child speak in front of others or asking him lots of questions where he feels under pressure to answer.
- Please share this information with all who communicate with your child.



For more information visit

STAMMA

The British Stammering Association
stamma.org

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