

How to help the child who stammers

Guidelines for good practice at home

1. For five minutes at least 3 times a week, daily if you can manage it, arrange a time in the day when you can give your child your full attention in a calm and relaxed atmosphere.
2. Slowing down your own speech when you talk to your child will make it easier for him/her to follow what you are saying and help him feel less rushed. This can be more helpful than telling the child to slow down, start again or take a deep breath.
3. It may help to pause for one second before you answer him or ask a question. This slow, less hurried way of speaking gives your child time before answering.
4. Show you are interested in what s/he says, not how he is says it. Look at him/her when s/he talks, then s/he knows you are listening and won't rush his/her speech.
5. Use the same sort of sentences your child does - keep them short and simple.
6. Keep natural eye-contact when s/he is speaking. Do not look away when s/he stammers.
7. Reduce the number of questions you ask. Always be sure that you give your child time to answer one before you ask another. Children can feel under pressure when asked a lot of questions at once.
8. Encourage everyone in the family to take turns to talk. This will reduce the amount that your child is interrupted and s/he interrupts others.
9. Praise your child for things s/he does well. This will help to build confidence.

10. Respond to the behaviour of the child who stammers in the same way as that of a child who does not stammer. Discipline needs to be appropriate and consistent.

11. Try to avoid a hectic and rushed lifestyle. Children who stammer respond well to a routine and structured environment at home and at school.

12. Stammering can increase when a child is tired. Try to establish regular sleep patterns and a regular healthy diet.