

Stammering information and advice

- Stammering, also known as stuttering, is common in children
- Around 8% of children – that's one in every 12 children will experience stammering, particularly between the ages of 2 and 5 years. Some children will start stammering after the age of 5. It can develop gradually or seem to suddenly appear
- Approximately 4 out of 5 children will stop stammering. For others stammering may continue into adulthood
- Stammering is complex with no single cause or simple cure
- Stammering can often run in families and is caused by small differences in the brain where talking develops
- What is stammering?
 - stretching out sounds ('I want a sssstory')
 - repeating parts of words/whole words several times ('mu-mu-mu-mu-mummy')
 - getting stuck on the first sound of a word so no sound comes out for a few seconds – often with tension in the face or upper body
 - using body/facial movements to help get a word out – stamps their foot, moves their head
 - losing eye contact when stuck on a word
- Parents **do not** cause stammering but the way you and other people respond to your child's stammer can make a huge difference
- How you can help -
 - Slow down your own rate of speech by using lots of pauses in your talking
 - Ask one question at a time and give your child plenty of time to answer
 - Wait and let your child finish – try not to interrupt or finish their sentence
 - Don't tell your child to slow down, stop, take a breath – this could lead to frustration and your child may forget what they are trying to say
 - Focus on what your child is saying not how they are saying it
 - Keep natural eye contact with your child and be at their level, this helps them know you are listening
 - Ensure everyone gets a turn to speak in conversations
 - Have 5 minutes 1 to 1 time with your child on a regular basis - try to make this distraction free and do something together that your child enjoys
 - Try and remain calm and relaxed about stammering; it is normal to feel anxious but try and avoid showing that anxiety to your child
 - Give the message that it is okay to stammer. It's important that children feel ok about stammering and not view it as something negative or something they shouldn't do

Useful stammering resources

Websites –

- www.michaelpalincenreforstammering.org
- www.STAMMA.org - Information for parents and professionals, useful videos for parents of pre-school children

Videos -

- My Stammering Tap <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGN0BB0HaCo>
- 7 Top Tips for Talking <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTpckAufNDE>
- Why do some children stammer? (South Tees SLT) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-KgZ321qeQ>
- [CBeebies Bedtime Stories - P-T: Ed Sheeran - I Talk Like a River - BBC iPlayer](#)

Books -

- Big Bright Feelings books - [Big Bright Feelings: Bloomsbury Publishing \(UK\)](#)
- Do Animals Stammer? by Arthur Minella and Emily Morton
- Glen the Galloway Goat by Michael Howe
- How to Talk so Little Kids Will Listen by Joanna Faber and Julie King (book for parents)

Apps -

- Please download the free app: **Penguin Stammering Support app - A 10-day programme for parents whose child has started stammering**. Each day has a short video with a task to help reflect on your situation. It then helps you set up strategies to support your child's talking. App is free and downloadable from phone's app store.
- **Alexa and Siri voice commands:** it is possible to change the settings on devices that use voice commands (such as Alexa and Siri) so that they give the speaker more time to speak before they respond. Turn the feature on for each device by following these steps:
 - Alexa:
Open Settings in the Alexa app
Go to Accessibility and enable 'Adaptive Listening Mode'
You should see a list with any compatible devices – select the ones you would like to enable this setting for
 - Siri:
Open Settings on your Apple device
Select Accessibility