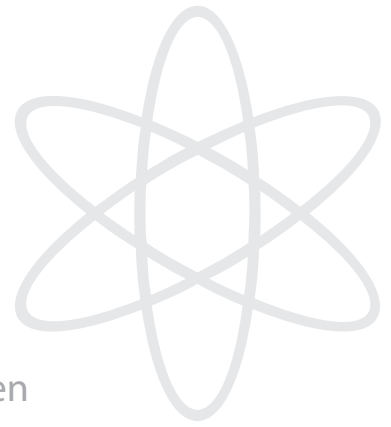


Information and advice for parents **1 of 2**



Fluency is a skill which gradually develops. Many children are hesitant in their speech as they learn new words, how to pronounce them and how to string words into sentences. When a child learns to walk, he may wobble, stumble and fall, especially in the early stages. Stumbling over sounds and words is a natural part of the process of learning to talk.

Parents do not cause stammering.

Four out of five young children who stammer will recover. There are a number of 'risk factors' which indicate which children are more likely to persist in stammering.

The children who are most likely to recover from stammering are those who:

- 1 Are already showing signs of getting better
- 2 Don't have any relatives who stammer
- 3 Aren't aware or worried about their speech
- 4 Don't have any other problems with speaking
- 5 Don't have advanced language skills
- 6 Have been stammering for less than a year
- 7 Have parents who are not worried about the stammering.

Some advice for parents

There are ways that you could help your child to be more fluent. You are probably doing some of these already, but there may be some new ideas.

- ✱ If a child gives himself time, he can think and plan what he is trying to say and he can co-ordinate the movements involved in speaking. Many children rush in to speak. You could try to set the pace for your child by trying to model pauses before you speak and using an unhurried rate.

Information and advice for parents **2 of 2**

✿ We all ask questions, and when a child is asked a question, he is expected to respond. His ability to answer fluently will depend on how difficult the question is and how good his language skills are. Parents can help their child to answer more fluently by:

- 1** Avoiding questions which are too complicated for your child
- 2** Giving him plenty of time to think of and give his reply
- 3** Avoiding asking another question before he has had time to answer the first one.

✿ When we are in a group, we often overlap or interrupt each other. It can be harder for a child who stammers if he is rushing to finish what he wants to say before someone else butts in or if he is rushing to interrupt someone else. You could help your child by ensuring that everybody listens to each other and nobody interrupts the speaker. He will then feel able to take his time and this can help him to be more fluent. It's also important to remember to keep things fair – other family members should have their say, as well as the child who stammers.

✿ If you can give your child some one-to-one 'quality' time, this may help him as he will have your undivided attention and there is no need to rush. In a busy family lifestyle, you may find it useful to have a brief, regular slot with each child.