

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Stammering General Strategies

The following are ways adults can support children who stammer during everyday conversations and activities:

- Give your child plenty of time to respond, letting them finish their own sentences. Try to avoid interrupting or making suggestions of things they could do to change their speech (i.e. don't tell them to stop, slow down, take a breath) – if interrupted, your child may lose their train of thought or feel like their speech is being corrected.
- Adults should use more pauses in their own speech and to use a slow relaxed style of speaking when talking to the child – this will help to reduce the pace of the conversation and the feeling of needing to rush and will provide a good model for speed of talking.
- It's helpful if you look at your child when they are talking. Keeping eye contact shows that you are listening to **what** they are saying rather than *how* they are saying it.
- Encourage equal turn taking in the family – encourage everyone to have a turn similar in length. You could use an object, for example, at the dinner table, to indicate someone's turn – when you have the object you can take your turn at speaking and others need to listen and wait until you have finished before they speak and hold the object.
- Reduce the number of questions you ask. Ask one question at a time and give your child plenty of time to answer before asking a further question. Questions often demand an immediate response which can increase pressure on the child who stammers and can increase the demands on their language skills.
- Have 5 – 10 minutes of one to one time with your child every day, without any distractions and competing for attention with other family members – do something together that your child enjoys e.g. look at a book together, talk about your day, play a game.

See the **STAMMA** website for more information: www.stamma.org