

How to help when your child is stuttering

Talk about stuttering

It's okay to talk about stuttering with your child. If they get upset about their talking, you could say something like "That was hard to get out but that's okay, I want you to finish what you want to say".

Build confidence

You can support your child's confidence by using descriptive praise. Look out for the things that your child does well and praise them, e.g. "I liked the way you helped your sister when she fell over. That was kind". You can also praise the content of their talking rather than how they said it, e.g. "Thanks for telling me about your good day at school."

Reduce the pace

Try to speak to your child in a natural but unhurried way and pause often. Wait a few seconds after they finish talking before you start to talk. Slowing down your talking will be more effective than giving them advice such as asking them to "stop and think" or "slow down".

Listen actively

Get down to your child's level, maintain eye contact, and give them time to say what they want to say. Avoid finishing your child's words/sentences. Use your facial expressions and body language to show your child that you're listening to, and interested in, what they're saying, not how they're saying it.

Ask less questions

It's helpful to give more comments and respond to what they're interested in and ask less questions, e.g. instead of asking "What's that?" you could say "Oh look it's a red car". When asking questions, ask one at a time and give your child plenty of time to answer.

Take turns

Encourage all family members to take turns talking and listening. Children, especially those who stutter, find it easier to talk when there are less interruptions.

Spend time together

Set aside some time (approx. 5mins) with your child each day when you can give them your undivided attention. Encourage them to choose what they want to play with and join in. This time is a good opportunity for you to put into practice the above strategies.

Adapted from 7 Tips for Talking with your Child - Stuttering Foundation of America

