Stuttering: Tops Tips for Family and Friends

- Avoid guessing the word or finishing sentences - it is tempting, but you may get it wrong or just make your child feel frustrated.

- Use normal eye contact - this doesn't mean staring! We all look around a bit when we talk to each other.

- Concentrate on what your child is saying, rather than the stuttering.

- It can be uncomfortable listening to your child stutter, but try to show you are calm and comfortable and interested in what he has to say.

- Try to show that you are not in a hurry - a sense of urgency builds tension in your child.

- If you are a fast speaker, this adds pressure and speeds up conversations. You might try to talk more slowly to take away the pressure of fast-paced conversations.

- Don't tell your child to "slow down" or "take a deep breath." It is too hard for the child to do and can actually become part of the problem.

- If the child is aware of the stutter, it is okay to mention it thoughtfully (e.g., "That was a hard word to say - but well done, you tried your best"). But not every time though!

- If you don't have time to listen, then say so (e.g., "I really want to hear what you have to say, but I have to make this phone call now - can we talk later?"). Make sure to remember your promise!

- Praise the child for the things that he is doing well - without focusing on his talking.

- Ask one question at a time - and give him time to answer!

- Often children who stutter do it more on long, difficult sentences. Be a good model and keep your sentences short and simple.