

Stuttering: Top 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.

Reference: Adapted from - "Top Tips for Family and Friends" <http://www.stutteringcentre.org>. Reprinted with permission from The Michael Palin Centre, The Association for Research into Stuttering in Childhood.