

# GET SUPPORT

Our website, helpline and webchat services are here for you.

The Parents section of the website includes relevant information about stammering, school and therapy. Or take a look at the Your Voice section for personal stories, including stories from parents of children who stammer.

For more support or information, call our helpline on 0808 802 0002 or use our webchat service at [stamma.org](http://stamma.org).

We're open from 10am - 12 noon and from 6pm-8pm each weekday.

**WE'RE HERE TO HELP**  
**Talk to us**

**Helpline: 0808 802 0002**  
**Webchat: [www.stamma.org](http://www.stamma.org)**

**Weekdays 10am-noon; 6pm-8pm**  
**Free. Confidential. Anonymous.**

**Or email us at**  
**[help@stamma.org](mailto:help@stamma.org)**

## BSA Facebook Support Group

Moderated by BSA staff and volunteers, this group provides a space for people to share experiences, ask for advice and talk openly about stammering.

It's a closed group, so posts there will only be seen by group members. Parents often comment on how helpful it is to connect with other parents and adults who stammer.

## UK Peer Support Group for Parents of Children who Stammer

A Facebook group for parents of children who stammer to support one another and share their experiences, thoughts and ideas. This is a closed group, so only members can post and respond.

## Michael Palin Centre for Stammering

A specialist centre, based in London, where speech and language therapists work with children and adults who stammer. Children and their parents from across the UK can have an assessment at the centre, which is funded by the charity Action for Stammering Children. The Michael Palin Centre also offers a helpline on 020 3316 8100.

## Action for Stammering Children

A charity supporting children and young people who stammer. [actionforstammeringchildren.org](http://actionforstammeringchildren.org)

*"Speaking to someone who understood stammering and provided guidance and contacts was enormously helpful and reassuring."*

Talk to us about any concerns you have about your child and stammering. We're here to listen, support and provide information. We can help you find details of your local NHS service and talk through how best to support your child.

# STAMMA.ORG

Keep up-to-date with our campaigns,  
get information and support.  
Join us or just subscribe.  
It's free. [Stamma.org/join](http://Stamma.org/join)

**STAMMA, The British Stammering  
Association**

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Office tel: 0208 983 1003  
Reg. charity nos: 1089967/SC038866



**In preschoolers,**  
stammering is not  
uncommon.

Stammering, or  
stuttering, affects up  
to 8% of children.  
In most children this  
will be short-lived.

Stammering isn't  
caused by nerves.  
It's mainly a  
neurological and  
often hereditary  
condition.

# STAMMA



Up to 8%, or about one in every 12 children, will experience stammering during their preschool years.

Examples of stammering include:

- repeating sounds or parts of words several times ("m-m-m-m-mummy" or "mu-mu-mu-mummy")
- stretching sounds ("I want a sstory")
- getting stuck on the first sound of a word so no sound comes out for a few seconds ("I got a ... teddy")

Some children may not be concerned about stammering at all. Others may start trying things to help get the words out, such as stamping a foot, or taking a big breath before speaking. And some children may try to avoid the stammering by saying something different or by speaking less.

## HOW TO HELP

1. Slow down your own rate of speech, but don't tell your child to slow down or take a deep breath.
2. Have one-on-one time (just five minutes every day) with your child, where they aren't competing for attention with tasks or other family members.
3. Ask one question at a time and give them plenty of time to answer.
4. Keep natural eye-contact with your child.
5. Focus on what your child says, not how they say it.
6. Pause before answering questions.
7. Make sure everyone gets a turn in conversation.
8. Acknowledge speech difficulties with reassurance and encouragement just as you would any other difficulty your child is experiencing.

## CAUSES

Stammering which begins in childhood is known as developmental stammering. It is often hereditary - about 60% of people who stammer have another family member who stammers. Stammering is primarily a neurological condition.

Parents do not cause stammering, but the way you respond to your child's stammer can make a big difference. If you or your child speak more than one language, that's fine. Carry on. Bilingualism doesn't cause stammering.

## WHEN TO ACT

If you or your child are worried about stammering, seek help. You don't need to 'wait and see'. Ask to speak to a speech and language therapist who is (or has support from) a stammering specialist. A speech and language therapist will:

- explore your concerns
- investigate whether this is stammering or something else
- help you and your child make sense of what's happening
- discuss with you whether the stammering is likely to continue or go away over time
- talk to you about options for support or therapy.

## REFERRALS

NHS speech and language therapy is free for children who stammer. Normally you will be able to refer your child yourself, either by completing a form or phoning the department. Sometimes you may need to ask your GP or health visitor to make the referral.

To find your local NHS speech and language therapy department, look online. For example, if you live in Leeds, type in 'children NHS speech and language therapy Leeds'. Or ask us to help you find your local service.

Another option is private speech and language therapy. Private therapists work outside the NHS and will charge a fee. The website of the Association of Speech & Language Therapists in Independent Practice is the place to find a private speech and language therapist: [www.helpwithtalking.com](http://www.helpwithtalking.com).

Speech and language therapists may work with you face-to-face, or online via teletherapy.

### Support & therapy

There are many ways a speech and language therapist can support you and your child. These include the following:

- helping you understand more about stammering so that it feels less worrying
- explaining the therapy options, including therapy approaches that are specifically designed for preschool children who stammer
- helping you and your child deal with any difficult thoughts and feelings you may have around stammering
- working with other family members or staff in early years settings, such as nurseries or childminders
- working with you on ways to keep your child chatting and developing their language and communication skills whether they are stammering or not
- finding out what affects your child's stammering
- working on speech patterns that can help your child say what they want to say more easily.

Every child and every family is different. Your therapist will work closely with you to agree the goals of any therapy, and then tailor the support they offer to you and your child.