

GET SUPPORT

Go to stamma.org for information on stammering, therapy and school. Our Your Voice section includes stories from parents of children who stammer.

Parent Support Groups & Workshops

We regularly run online events to support parents. Email familysupport@stamma.org for details.

STAMMA - Space to Stammer

Moderated by STAMMA staff and volunteers, this Facebook group provides a space for people to share experiences, ask for advice and talk openly about stammering. This is a closed group, so posts there will only be seen by group members.

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 speech & language therapy centre in London. Parents from across the UK can get a free assessment for their child (which is funded by Action for Stammering Children). It also has a helpline. Call them on 020 3316 8100.

Action for Stammering Children

A charity supporting children and young people who stammer. Go to actionforstammeringchildren.org

HERE TO HELP

“Speaking to someone who understood stammering and provided guidance and contacts was enormously helpful and reassuring.”

Helpline Caller

Talk to us

Helpline: 0808 802 0002
Webchat: stamma.org/help
Email: help@stamma.org

Mon-Thurs 10am-2pm; 4pm-8pm
Free. Confidential. Anonymous.

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 you through how best to support your child.

Become a member for free or
join our mailing list.
Go to stamma.org/join

STAMMA

The British Stammering Association
Box 140, 43 Bedford St, London WC2E 9HA
Office tel: 0208 983 1003

STAMMA.ORG

Reg. charity nos: 1089967/SC038866



STAMMA

In preschoolers, stammering is quite common.

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

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

STAMMA



Around 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 ssstory").
- 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. Some children may try to avoid stammering by saying something different or by speaking less.

CAUSES

Stammering which begins in childhood is known as developmental stammering. It's often hereditary – about 60% of people who stammer have a family member who stammers. Stammering is primarily neurological, which means there's a slight difference in the way the brain is wired.

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 are bilingual, that's fine. Carry on. Bilingualism doesn't cause stammering.

HOW TO HELP

1. Slow down your rate of speech, but don't tell your child to slow down or take a deep breath.
2. Have one-to-one time every day with your child, even if it's just five minutes, where they aren't competing for your attention.
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.

If you or your child are worried about stammering, get 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. They will:

- explore your concerns
- identify whether it's stammering or something else
- help you both 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

You can get NHS speech and language therapy for your child. Normally you can contact them directly. Sometimes you may need to ask your GP or health visitor to make the referral.

Look online for your local NHS speech and language therapy service. For example, search for 'children NHS speech and language therapy Leeds'. Or ask us to help you find your local service (our details are overleaf).

Another option is private speech and language therapy. Private therapists work outside the NHS and will charge a fee. See the Association of Speech & Language Therapists in Independent Practice to find a private speech and language therapist: helpwithtalking.com.

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

A speech and language therapist can support you and your child in different ways. They can:

- Help you understand more about stammering so that it feels less worrying.
- Explain the therapy options, including approaches that are designed for preschool children who stammer.
- Help you and your child deal with difficult thoughts you may have around stammering.
- Work with other family members or staff in early years settings, such as nurseries or childminders.
- Work with you on ways to keep your child chatting and developing their language and communication skills, whether they're stammering or not.
- Find out what affects your child's stammering.
- Work 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.