

How to help a child who stammers in the classroom

Stammering affects up to 8% of children, there isn't one cause .

It affects a young's person ability to coordinate the movements of speech and can impact on how confident they feel to talk in front of others. The severity of how it impacts them can vary.

Every young person is unique and individual. How they want to be supported is individual too, but some general advice includes:

- Reduce the demands on the young person especially if they are stammering a lot. Don't make them talk unless they volunteer.
- Give the child time to respond.
- Slow down your own pace of talking and reduce the pace of talking within the class by using pausing.

JUST LISTEN

- Keep eye contact, but don't demand eye contact from the child.
- Reduce the number of questions directed at the young person in front of others and find other ways to check their understanding.
- Regulate turn taking in class. Encourage others to wait and listen.
- Don't finish off sentences for the young person
- Be open and ask the young person what helps. This should be sensitively and not in front of others. Something like "when your talking gets stuck, what would like me to do?"
- Monitor any negative reactions from peers and encourage empathy and respect for speech differences

The accompanying training PPT has audio to ensure the correct vocabulary is used.



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