

Our main aim:

Is to encourage openness and increase understanding so that your child is developing skills for life as a confident communicator. Talking about a stammering with someone who understands makes it easier to deal with and ensures it doesn't become a barrier to achieving what you want out of life

What do we offer?

Ages 7-11:

Initial assessment to discuss with you what support is appropriate

Liaison with schools on how to support a pupil who stammers

Sessions exploring facts about stammering, learning about positive role models and problem solving any difficulties. These can be fun and reassuring for children

Ages 11-19:

Initial assessment to discuss whether stammering is causing any difficulties

Advice for parents and schools

Follow up sessions look at learning more about stammering, working on confidence and self-esteem, overcoming difficult situations and, if appropriate, exploring ways to stammer more easily



Stammering

Information for parents of older children and young adults

Specialist Dysfluency Service for Children and Young People
Speech & Language Therapy

British Stammering Association

www.stamma.org

Advice for parents, teenagers and teachers

What is stammering?

Stammering and stuttering mean the same thing – a difficulty with the timing of speech. The person knows what they want to say but gets stuck getting started. Phrases, words or sounds can be repeated (repetitions) stretched out (prolongations) or even stuck completely (blocks).

1% of the adult population stammers – it often starts in early childhood and research suggests it results from the way the brain processes speech. Brain imaging studies have shown differences in the wiring of the brain for speech in people who stammer. Stammering is not caused by anxiety or nervousness, although they can cause an increase, as can illness, excitement or stress. There can be a genetic factor because stammering tends to run in families.

As with any problem, it helps to talk about it, get some information and for people to understand what they can do to help. How you can help your child depends on their answers to questions like:

- **Is it mild or severe?**
- **Is it stopping you doing things you want to do?**
- **Do you feel embarrassed or upset when it happens?**
- **Do you get angry with yourself, or other people, about stammering?**

If they answer ‘**No**’ then talking about it with you may be enough, they may be managing really well and probably notice their stammer much less than you do.

How to help

You can help them communicate confidently by following this advice:

- **Listen to *what* they say not how they say it, even if you notice stammering**
- **Be patient, don’t be tempted to finish sentences or fill in words – people like to speak for themselves**
- **Don’t give advice like ‘slow down’, ‘take a deep breath’ or ‘start again’. This can make the person feel more frustrated, draw attention to the stammer and encourage unnatural speaking patterns**
- **Stammering is variable from day to day and you may notice it more when your child is angry, upset or excited – commenting on their speech will only make them more frustrated. Not reacting to the stammer and keeping calm yourself will work better**
- **Encourage and support; focus on the things your child enjoys and is good at as this will help their confidence**

If your child is worried about their speech and would like some help to understand more about stammering, and learn strategies to help, contact the East Coast Community Healthcare on 01493 809977.