



**Children's Speech and Language Therapy**  
**Advice and resources for teachers of children and young people**  
**who stammer**




**Advice and resources for teachers of children and young people who stammer**

**Please share the advice with all staff who work with the child or young person.**

Children and young people need to grow up in a communication environment that lets them know that **it is okay to stammer, and that you are accepting and comfortable with it.** This provides a model for the class to follow!

**Make small changes for ALL students, not just the child who stammers**

**You can support stammering for all children by:**

-  **Listening** to what the child says, without interrupting, finishing off words or giving advice, **just wait.** Give time and patience and let them say their own words.
- Keeping **natural eye contact** and show relaxed body language and facial expressions.



- Giving **praise** for all the things they do well, including their talking (regardless of whether they are stammering or not). Be genuine and specific.
- **Talking openly** to children about their stammer is helpful. However, your speech therapist can give you more advice about how and when to have this conversation.



- Being mindful of the **language used to talk about stammering** – talk about more/less stammering rather than it being a bad/good day or speech being better or worse which can give a message that stammering is bad or wrong.
- **Building resilience** – let children be independent and do things for themselves, this includes talking for themselves; let them make their own mistakes, solve their own problems; give them praise for their efforts and offer empathy and support when needed. This will help to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
- Having the **same expectations** as for students who don't stammer

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**Twitter:** @BarnsleySCH

**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/c/Barnsleyspeechandlanguagetherapy>

With **all of us** in mind.

- Including children who stammer in class
- **Giving them your full attention when he/she is talking to you.** If you're busy, helping him/her to wait rather than giving half your attention
- **Encouraging turn talking within the class and group discussions:** Explain the rules:
  - listen to the person who is talking
  - look at the speaker
  - wait until the other person has finished
  - everyone should have a turn
  - don't carry on too long

It is harder to talk when being interrupted or having to rush to interject into a conversation. Joining in a group discussion can be very hard for people who stammer due to the rapid timing and crossfire of speech. People who stammer need more time to talk

- **Talking slowly and using pauses** rather than telling them to slow down, so the child knows there is time to talk
- **Using comments rather than questions.** Be sure to listen to the answer if you do ask a question.  
For example:  
instead of 'what did you have for lunch?' say 'I wonder what you had for lunch' or 'I had chips for lunch' then wait



- **Watch out for children who are saying less, not joining in** and let your therapist know
- **Be alert for teasing/bullying.** Children who stammer are more vulnerable. Refer to school policies and take immediate action.

**As well as the above, for older children and young people:**

- **Speak to them about how best you can help in class and find out what they are comfortable with (each subject teacher could do this as it may differ from lesson to lesson, or this could be coordinated and disseminated by the SENCO).** Regular check ins are good!

We want to gently encourage children to join in without being under pressure to do so. Ask the Speech and Language Therapist for more advice if needed.

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## Our children tell us the following is hard for them.....

- **TAKING TURNS IN A GROUP:** see above
- **TEASING/BULLYING:** see above
- **ANSWERING THE REGISTER:** enable students to respond in alternative ways can be helpful. This may be being flexible about how the students respond such as being able to say here, present, yes rather than a set response, permitting a nod of the head or a wave or using a self check in system.
- **READING ALOUD:** ask the child what their preference is and work towards reading in front of the class - sometimes it may be reading to a peer, an adult and then a small group, or reading at the same time as someone else; remember some students will be happy to read to the class!
- **ASKING OR ANSWERING QUESTIONS:** Children who stammer might not put their hand up even if they know the answer to a question, for fear of stammering in front of the class or they might find it difficult to ask for help if they haven't understood.
  - Let children put their hands up to answer questions rather than cold calling or using a random name generator
  - If the child puts their hand up, try not to let them wait too long for their turn as anxiety can increase
  - If might be that you think they know the answer to a question, ask them if they would like to have a go at answering it.
  - Wander round the class to check if everyone is following OK. This will make the child who stammers more likely to let you know if they haven't understood something.
- **GIVING PRESENTATIONS:** Allow extra time, foster tolerance, comment on content not the stammer, model waiting and listening.
- **DINNER QUEUES:** Can be hard if you're worrying about stammering in front of a lot of people or holding people up. Make sure lunch time supervisors are trained in stammering and know to wait for the person to say what they want without interrupting. Some schools have provided lunch passes to skip the queue for children whose fear and anticipation of stammering increases as they wait.
- **FEELING COMPLETELY STUCK:** Talk to them about what you can do to help if they get completely stuck

**They also tell us:** they have never seen stammering posters in their school!!!! You can help by displaying:

- **Posters** by Abed Ahmed (stammer teacher):  
<https://www.trythisteaching.com/2021/03/stammer-awareness/>

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- We like the following:
  - Facts about stammering
  - Dos and Don'ts
  - I wish my teacher knew
  - Reasonable Adjustments
  - How schools can create a safe environment for children who stammer
  - Do you have a friend who stammers?
  - If you are a person who stammers

And remember to celebrate International Stammering Awareness Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> October every year!!

### Resources for school staff:

- Also see advice and useful websites on [www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk](http://www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk).
- Watch the video clip 'WAIT WAIT' <https://youtu.be/je7mlAzyD7A>
- Stammering training: Training - South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- **Watch our YouTube videos about stammering: (Barnsley Speech and Language Therapy)** (open camera and hold over this square to get link)



- **Visit Stamma Website** ([www.stamma.org](http://www.stamma.org))  
There are resources and information about reasonable adjustments and how to support both primary and secondary school aged children [https://stamma.org/get-support/in-education/school Education reasonable adjustments.pdf](https://stamma.org/get-support/in-education/school-Education-reasonable-adjustments.pdf) ([stamma.org](http://stamma.org))
- **Visit the Michael Palin Centre website** [www.michaelpalincentreforstammering.org](http://www.michaelpalincentreforstammering.org)  
You will find the following:
  - Information for teachers
  - Resources for Teachers
-  **Visit Action for Stammering Children website:**  
<https://actionforstammeringchildren.org/>
- **About Stammering e learning:** This interactive, accessible course is available FREE by registering on: [www.bdcftelearning.co.uk](http://www.bdcftelearning.co.uk)
- **My stammering tap** (analogy describing the experience of stammering)  
<https://youtu.be/IGN0BB0HaCo>

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**What the Barnsley children and young people want school staff to know:**

Be aware that it doesn't change who we are as students or how intelligent we are

We may need a little more support with communication than others

Be patient, don't finish off our words

Accept that sometimes we can't answer questions because the words won't come out, it's not that we're being lazy, it's just too much of a distressing situation

It doesn't change who you [are]... [It's not] representative of your character

Support anyone who stutters as it's a hard task to deal with on a daily basis

Don't judge someone for stuttering, they can't help it as people with a stammer are neurologically different to people who don't stutter. Saying spit it out isn't going to change anything.

Be patient and don't try to finish off their sentences as it is an underwhelming feeling when you can't finish what you wanted to ideally say

Ask the person/talk to the person [about how you can best help]

Reward your child if they've done something well ..... regardless of whether they stammered or not; let them know if they've accomplished something e.g. talking in class or asking a question

Be supportive of your child's stammer and follow the guidance of the speech therapist

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