

How to help when my child has started stammering

1. Try to give your child a 'special time' for 5 minutes. The 'special time' should be just for you and your child, with no interruptions from anyone else, or the telephone or the television. When your child is speaking, give him / her time to finish what he is saying. Aim to do this 4-5 times per week.
2. When you have the 'special time' with your child, follow his / her lead by playing with what s/he wants to and talking about what s/he wants to talk about. Try not to 'direct' your child too much. During this time, remember to praise your child ("You're good at that" or "that was a nice thing to do". Aim for a relaxed atmosphere rather than rushed.
3. Slow down your own speech, this will provide a good model for your child and will make it easier to follow what you are saying, and make him / her feel less rushed. S/ he may even follow your lead by slowing down his / her speech.
4. It is also helpful if you pause for a second before answering your child, or asking a question. This is a less hurried way of speaking and gives your child more time to think before responding.
5. Try to use the same sort of sentences as your child. Model back what s/he has said to you if s/he has an episode of non-fluency.
6. Keep a natural eye-contact when s/he is speaking. Do not look away when a non-fluency occurs
7. Reduce the number of questions you ask. Children can feel under pressure when asked a lot of questions at once.
8. Encourage everyone in the family to take turns, and not all speak at once. This will provide a reduced pressure on the child because s/he will not get interrupted when speaking.