

Information for parents and carers

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# Top Tips to Support Children and Young People Who Stammer

**Speech & Language Therapy Department  
Community & Therapy Services**

**This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries you may have.**



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## Background

About 5% of children will go through a stammering phase as they develop language. Most will recover fluent speech without intervention. However, 1:5 are at risk of continuing to stammer and it is important we support them by use of the following strategies as soon as possible.

## General Advice

### Do...

- Give your child plenty of time to speak
- Keep looking at your child when they stammer
- Keep your speech rate slower
- Keep your sentences short and simple
- Keep relaxed and calm

### Don't...

- Ask lots of questions, try commenting on what they are doing instead
- Correct their speech or tell them to go slower
- Interrupt them or finish sentences for them

## What can I do to help?

It is fine to be sympathetic. Children can sometimes feel under less pressure once they know someone understands.

For example, "You know when you said that sometimes your words get stuck. Well, is there anything you would like me to do, or should I just wait and listen until you finish?"

## Help your child to keep language simple

- Keep your language simple, use short sentences with more pauses
- Try not to ask too many questions, this can put your child on the spot to talk
- Help your child to feel there is no hurry to finish what they are saying
- Try not to interrupt your child when they are stammering
- Slow the rate of your own speech, rather than telling your child to slow down
- Watch your body language, try not to look impatient or worried
- Give one instruction at a time

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## Help your child to take turns talking

Taking turns is important as your child may stammer more when:

- Talking quickly
- Competing with other children for your attention
- They try to say something and someone else is talking

## Help your child to develop confidence

- Think about ways you can help your child build confidence in lots of ways, not just talking. Use specific praise. For example, "Good sitting", "Good tidying up".
- Don't feel under pressure to say the words for your child
- Many children would prefer that the listener waits while they say the words
- Ask your child what they would like you to do

## What else can I do?

- Try keeping a diary and recording when your child stammers more or less. You may spot a pattern such as worse at bedtime, or in holidays
- Have a quiet time after school (a drink, look at a book or watch TV). This quiet time should last about 5 minutes
- You may have noticed your child stammers less when doing some activities. For example, playing by themselves or when singing. Build these activities into your daily routine
- If there are a lot of people talking at once encourage turn taking

## Other Information

Useful websites include:

- [www.stammering.org](http://www.stammering.org)
- [www.stammercentre.org](http://www.stammercentre.org)

## References

Clinical Guidelines (2007) Royal College of Speech and language Therapists.

Stammering in Pre school children: a parents guide (2010) British Stammering Association.

Communicating Quality 3 (2006) Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.



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## Community Clinics

Immingham Children's Centre, Eastfield School, Margaret Street, Immingham.

A clinic is also held at the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby. This is held in the Speech and Language Therapy Department. Tel: 03033 303758

For Scunthorpe and surrounding area: Monarch House Tel: 01724 203755

## Parking

If your appointment is to attend the Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, you will need to pay for parking.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: [nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

**Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.**

## Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital  
Scarcho Road  
Grimsby  
DN33 2BA

Scunthorpe General Hospital  
Cliff Gardens  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 7BH

Goole & District Hospital  
Woodland Avenue  
Goole  
DN14 6RX

03033 306999

[www.nlg.nhs.uk](http://www.nlg.nhs.uk)

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