

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: When to intervene with stammering

Some young children may go through a short phase of stammering - repeating sounds or words - as they develop speech and language skills, especially when they are excited and have a lot to say.

Most of those children will recover fluent speech without any intervention. However, if stammering persists, early intervention has been shown to produce positive results.

If you are unsure about when to take action, here are some tips to help you:



1. Observe the child's speech patterns. Give it some time to assess whether it's a phase
2. Familiarise yourself with typical speech and language development for the age group of the particular child. This will help you to distinguish between normal fluency challenges and potential problematic stammering
3. Discuss your observations with parents/carers. They may give some invaluable insight into their child's speech patterns at home and any measures they may have already taken
4. Some typical features to look for are:
 - a. Prolonging certain sounds and not being able to move on to the next e.g. mmmmmine
 - b. Repeating certain sounds e.g. b-b-b-banana or parts of a word e.g. mu-mu-mu-mummy
 - c. Long pauses between words or sounds as they try and say a word, phrase or sentence making speech sound 'jerky'
5. Give children time and space to speak. Make efforts not to guess or provide words or finish children's sentences
6. If the speech disruptions are persistent and prolonged e.g. repeating sounds, syllables or words, or the child becomes distressed by their challenges, it is wise to seek professional guidance/assistance from a speech and language therapist (SLT); they are trained to evaluate and treat speech and language difficulties
7. Continue to monitor the child's progress and reassess the situation. Document any changes and discuss/collaborate with parents and any supporting professionals.

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- [Vocabulary and early language skills online course](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna