

# Helpful responses to stammering

## Helpful Responses

### Type of response

Showing your child that you understand their thoughts, feelings and behaviour (empathy):

Your child is experiencing distress if they show it so **WING** it...

I'm **w**ondering...

I'm **i**magining...

I'm **n**oticing...

I'm **g**uessing...

or comment on what you hear and see.

### How to do it and why it is helpful:

- **Non-verbally:**
  - a pat, squeeze or a hug
  - a facial expression that shows you know how the child feels such as, a sad face
- **Verbally by commenting on what you observe:**
  - 'I can see that you are frustrated/upset'
  - 'I'm noticing that you are sad'
  - 'I'm guessing it can be annoying when your word gets stuck like that'
  - 'Mummy imagines that you are confused as to why that word took longer to say'

Children's feelings and experiences need to be understood; they want to know that you care. Empathy also helps build resilience, confidence and self-esteem in your child and your relationship with your child.

### Allowing the child to stammer

by accepting that stammering is currently the child's natural way of talking.

- **Making natural eye contact**
- **Focusing on what the child is saying**
- **Responding to what they say**

This shows you value what your child has to say and that you accept them for who they are. This is valuable for building resilience, your relationship with your child, confidence and self-esteem.

### Allowing the child time to speak for themselves and to problem solve or to self-advocate (ask for what they need)

- **Actively listening**
- **Waiting for the child to have their turn – being patient**
- **Using reassuring non-verbal communication such as, nodding your head or a relaxed facial expression**

When children stammer they need more time; stammered words take longer to say. When you give children time you will be amazed at what they **can** do!