

Unhelpful responses to stammering

Unhelpful Responses

Type of response

Ignoring it

for fear that drawing attention to stammering and any responses to it will cause more stammering (not true).



Examples of unhelpful response

- Not talking about stammering or about their child's responses to their stammering (e.g. the child's frustration)
- Not looking at the child when they are stammering

Children who stammer need to be communicated with in the same way as any other child and comforted when they are in distress.

'Playing down' the child's words, behaviour or feelings

because they cause discomfort for the adult or they don't want their child to experience discomfort.



- 'It's okay' (when the child is not feeling okay)
- 'Don't be silly' (when the child is not being silly)
- 'No, you don't...[feel sad]' (when the child is feeling this way)

In order to develop emotional intelligence, children's feelings need to be understood and communicated back to them in a way that demonstrates care. This helps build resilience, confidence and self-esteem as well as strengthening the relationship with the child.

Compensating

in the belief that they are helping the child or because they don't want people to hear the stammering due to stigma/shame.



- Speaking for the child
- Interrupting the child
- Finishing the child's sentence
- Allowing the child to speak over other people

The child has a voice; they can communicate. They also need to learn the rules of effective communication such as, listening and turn-taking.

Trying to reduce the stammering

because they want the child to speak without stammering; they don't know what to do; they think children who stammer need more time to think (not true).



- 'Slow down' or 'Take your time'
- 'Take a deep breath' or 'Calm down'
- 'Say it again' or 'Say it properly'
- 'Think before you speak'

These give the child the message that they are speaking incorrectly, which may cause them to develop negative thoughts and feelings about their speech. This can lead to avoidance of talking and/or lowered self-esteem.