

# TreatPaCS

*Children who stutter do not do it deliberately.*

## My child stutters... What can I do?

Research shows that children start stuttering because they are susceptible to it, they have a predisposition. Stress and pressure affect that predisposition. Some children are more susceptible than others.

We cannot therefore ask them to make a conscious effort not to stutter, as this only increases the pressure to speak.

In this flyer we explain what you can do!

*If your child has difficulty speaking, you want to help! That is normal! What can you do?*

We want to keep the talking enjoyable.

'Take your time' is a golden rule.

Speech rates can be high at peak times in a family. A lot is said in a short time. For your child, this may be faster than it can handle.

Taking an occasional break while talking to your child helps enormously.

React **neutrally** to the stuttering, which is not so easy if the stuttering feels uncomfortable or upsetting to you. Try the following:

- Focus on 'what' your child says and not on 'how' he or she does it.
- Try to wait until your child has finished and continue to look at him or her as you would at anyone else

Do not force your child to talk.

You can also tell a story or be busy together without asking questions!

Repeating in your own words what your child has just told you once in a while is reassuring (mirroring or shadowing).

If you do not have time to listen, invite your child to tell you later when you do have time.

Also make sure the surroundings are quiet, it is not easy to have a conversation with a lot of noise.

### *What not to do?*

Asking the child to speak more slowly or to think carefully first, indirectly sends the message that it must try harder. This leads to more effort during speech. More effort leads to more stuttering.

Advice such as "breathe properly first!" is better avoided. They lead to unnatural behaviour. This also leads to more speaking pressure and therefore more stuttering.

Limit the language pressure, do not give 'language lessons', allow errors.

You can show by your attitude (nodding, looking at and shadowing what your child said) that those little stutters don't matter.