

## What is stammering?

Stammering is a speech disorder that causes interruptions in the rhythm or flow of speech. These interruptions may include:

- **'repetitions'** of sounds (c-c-can), syllables (da-da-daddy), words (and-and-and) or phrases (I want-I want-I want). Repetitions might happen once (b-ball, can-can) or multiple times (I-I-I-I want, m-m-m-m-m-m-m-mummy).
- **'prolongations'** where sounds or parts of the word are stretched out (caaaaan I go)
- **'blocks'** where when it looks like the child is stuck, trying to speak with no sound coming out. They get stuck.

There are often secondary behaviours which accompany stammering. These may be verbal and include grunts, small non-speech sounds, filler words (um/er) or pauses. They can also be non-verbal like grimacing, blinking or body movements.

## Who does it effect?

Stammering usually starts in early childhood, often by the age of three. It may start gradually over days, week or months, or it can be sudden, over hours or a day. Stammering may change in type or frequency over time. It may decrease or seem to go away for periods of time.

Not all children who start stammering will continue. As many as 70-75% of children who start to stammer are thought to recover naturally without treatment. This natural recovery might occur quickly or take as long as a couple of years from when it first started.

## What can parents do to help?

If you think your child is stammering you can contact a Speech and Language Therapist at Chaterpillar's to discuss your concerns. In the meantime, you can try the following:

- **Don't** fill in words or finish sentences for your child.
- **Don't** tell your child to slow down, take a breath, or relax..
- **DO** give your child lots of time to finish what they're saying.
- **DO** let your child know you are listening through your body language and eye contact. Listen to their message, not just how they are saying it.



BOOK AN APPOINTMENT OR CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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