

Identifying a child who stammers at primary school

Occasionally a stammer may not have been identified in the Early Years when intervention would have provided the best chance of recovery. Family or individual circumstances may have made it difficult to identify a stammer until the child was older and already attending primary school. When this happens parents should still contact a speech and language therapist who ideally specialises in stammering so that support can be put in place. The school may make this referral if preferred, as long as the school considers it to be necessary and the parent consents.

Many services are able to work with the teacher as well as the parent to support the child. The BSA knows from parents of children of primary school age that many of them worry if their child has not become fluent after therapy sessions. They may worry about the effects of continuing to stammer on their child's progress. However, it is reassuring to know that even if your child is still stammering as he progresses through primary school, support from a therapist, his teacher and you can help him to maintain his confidence and manage his speech.

Be positive

You should adopt a positive attitude to your child's speech difficulty and avoid letting anxiety, which you may be feeling, affect him. Try to talk with your child about his speech whenever he seems to want to do so, openness and a relaxed attitude by all the key adults in his life allows the growing child to see his stammer as something he occasionally does, and not what he is.

Stammering need not hold you back

Children who stammer need not be held back as long as they are supported in managing their speech at home and in school. If you are feeling anxious contact the [BSA:Helpline](#) to talk to someone who understands how you feel.

How can speech therapy help my child

The [BSA](#) can help you to learn more about supporting the older child. It can put you in touch with a speech and language therapist in your area, who specialises in stammering and has access to all the latest information and types of therapy available.

Early Intervention by a speech and language therapist gives the best chance of recovery from stammering, but the BSA knows from parents and therapists that a minority of children will continue to stammer, even though they have received therapy at a young age. Sometimes parents find this hard to come to terms with because they worry that if their child continues to stammer it will hold them back in school and make it hard for them to develop good social skills. When you feel anxious like this it is very important to take advice from a therapist and contact the [BSA:Helpline](#) to talk with someone who understands how you feel.

Speech and language therapy is always helpful for any child whose stammer is causing him problems. While Early Intervention gives the best chance of recovery, such is the unpredictable nature of stammering that less commonly recovery has been known to take place at an older age. Even if fluency is never achieved, parents should continue to take advice from a therapist and the [BSA](#), as modern approaches can help the child to maintain his confidence and self-esteem, even though he is continuing to stammer.

There is no guaranteed 'cure' for stammering. However, therapy will help your child to develop ways to speak more fluently and to understand how to make progress by learning what to do when things feel difficult. Therapists help with dealing with issues at school, with friends, and encourage him to work out what helps him. This gives him confidence and gives him tools for dealing with situations that may worry him.

Stammering can affect every part of your child's life. This is why speech therapy must address every angle: helping your child to help himself in developing confidence, social skills, self-awareness, speech fluency and problem-solving strategies. While your child will probably have individual sessions with the therapist, there is often an opportunity for him to attend an intensive course during the school holidays for instance. Often parents, and even the class teacher are invited to attend during the course and this sense of all working together can feel very supportive for your child.

As long as a child is supported at home and school, with advice from a therapist as needed, then he can achieve to the level of his potential. There are many examples of successful achievers in all walks of life to prove that stammering need not hold you back.

Stammering need not hold you back

The BSA knows of adults in all these different types of jobs, some of which call for a lot of training and considerable talking in the job. This should reassure parents.

- Acting in film, television and theatre
- Air traffic Control
- Armed Forces
- Call Centres
- Careers Guidance
- Catering
- Church Ministry
- Civil Service
- Company Director
- Customer Service
- Engineering
- Fundraiser
- Hair and Beauty Therapy
- Hotels
- IT
- Laboratories
- Law
- Leisure
- Libraries
- Marketing
- Medicine
- Music
- Nursing
- Nursery Nursing
- Police Officer
- Politics; Member of House of Lords/Member of Parliament
- Printing
- Public relations
- Reception
- Recruitment
- Retail
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Statistical Analysis
- Stores Management
- Teaching
- Technical Work
- University research/Lecturing/Professorships in both Arts and Science

Summary

Supporting a child who stammers in primary school

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Stammering need not hold you back

The BSA knows of adults in many different types of jobs, some of which call for a lot of training and considerable talking in the job. This should reassure parents that with support their child can achieve to his potential.