

Helpful Strategies – a reminder

There are many ways you can support your child's talking at home and we are here to guide you with this.

We have already discussed a number of general strategies which can be very helpful during moments of stammering. These include;

- Try to focus on *what* your child is saying rather than *how* their words sound.
- Wait for your child to finish their words/ sentences in their own time.
- Avoid asking your child to 'slow down' or 'take their time' as this could make your child self conscious over time. Instead, model a slower pace by pausing for a second or two longer before you take your turn to speak.
- Consider your use of questions as these can add extra demands on your child's talking system. These demands include; how complicated the question is, the expectation of a response and time pressures. When you do ask a question try to keep it simple and allow plenty of time for your child to respond.
- Ensure everybody in the family (including your child) takes fair turns as much as possible during games and conversations. This will help your child understand there is no rush to speak.
- It is a good thing to be open about stammering and to acknowledge this in an easy going way e.g. "those words were hard to say but you got there in the end" or "that was a tricky word to say". You can also acknowledge your own hesitations to show that talking doesn't always go smoothly for everybody e.g. "I got my words mixed up then" or "I meant to say tiger but I said Lion". For older children, have a chat with them and ask them what they find helpful and not so helpful.
- We want children to know that stammering is ok and that there is no such thing as a 'perfect talker'. It can be positive and helpful to use language like 'stammering more' or 'stammering less' rather than 'stammer is worse' or 'talking is better'.

When we are working with children and families our overall aim is to help the child to be the most **confident communicator** they can be. Being a confident communicator will 'look' different for each child and you are crucial in helping us understand what will work best for your child.