

# Stammering & Christmas

Stammering may sound like repeating sounds or words, stretching a sound, pausing with no sound, or adding extra sounds or words. Stammering is a difference in how people talk. It has a neurological cause and often runs in families.

## Variability

- Stammering varies. Some days a person may stammer more and some days less.
- Exciting times like holidays or Christmas can lead to more stammering.



## Listen

- Listen with patience and interest.
- If they pause or get stuck, wait calmly.
- Keep natural eye contact.



## Wait

- Let them finish what they want to say in their own time.
- Do not interrupt or finish their sentences unless they ask for help.

## Openness

- It's okay to talk about stammering.
- Use neutral language (more/less stammering rather than better/worse).
- Explain what stammering is in a simple way.
- Talk about what helps (waiting, giving time to speak, making sure everyone gets a turn in the conversation)

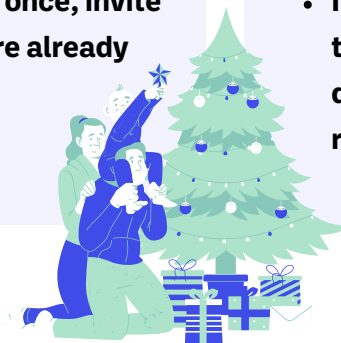
## Advice

- Avoid offering advice such as “take a breath”; “think about what you’re saying”; “try again”. Although well-intentioned, this extra pressure can make your child feel that their stammering is not okay.
- Waiting while your child stammers is supportive and empowering for your child.



## Create space in conversations

- Family and group gatherings can be busy and conversations move quickly. Give everyone turns to talk in a big group.
- If two people begin speaking at once, invite the child to continue if they were already trying to speak.



## Gently include

- Try not to put them on the spot by asking them to talk or answer questions such as “Tell them your name”.
- Include them gently and use comments to start up a conversation instead of direct questions ‘Wow that looks fun!’ rather than ‘What are you doing?’