

Teacher Tips for Supporting Students Who Stammer

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

Every student deserves to feel confident and included in the classroom – and this includes those who stammer.

Stammering (or stuttering) is a speech difference that affects how fluently a person speaks, but it doesn't reflect their intelligence or ability.

As a teacher, your attitude, understanding, and classroom strategies can make a significant positive impact on a student who stammers.

This leaflet offers practical tips to help you create a safe, supportive learning environment where all students feel heard and respected.

It helps when teachers don't make a big deal out of it."

"It helps when I'm allowed to speak in my own way."

It helps when they don't rush me."



10

Top tips

1. Listen Patiently – Don't Finish Their Sentences

Give students time to speak. Don't interrupt or try to guess their words – this can increase pressure and reduce confidence.

2. Maintain Natural Eye Contact

Stay calm and attentive. Avoid looking away or showing signs of discomfort. Your body language communicates that you're listening and supportive.

3. Focus on What They Say, Not How They Say It

Respond to the content of their message, not the fluency of their speech. This helps build their confidence and shows respect.

4. Give Extra Time to Answer

Avoid rushing them. If needed, allow more time for oral tasks, presentations, or reading aloud. Consider alternatives if appropriate.



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5. Offer Speaking Opportunities Without Pressure

Include students in class discussions but give them the choice to pass or respond in a different way (e.g., writing or smaller groups).

6. Be Open and Supportive

If the student is comfortable, have a private conversation to ask how they'd like to be supported. Respect their preferences.

7. Avoid Drawing Attention

Don't ask students to "slow down" or "take a deep breath" in front of others. These comments, though well-meaning, can be discouraging.

8. Prepare for Presentations Together

Help them rehearse, use visual aids, or pre-record parts if needed. Be flexible and focus on their strengths.

9. Educate the Class About Communication Differences

With the student's permission, consider activities that promote awareness and empathy about stammering and other communication styles.

10. Work With Families and Specialists

Collaborate with speech and language therapists and keep open communication with parents/carers for consistent support.

Why This Matters?

As a teacher, your understanding can help reduce anxiety, build confidence, and ensure students who stammer feel valued and included. Your support makes a difference.



"When my teacher gave me time and didn't interrupt, I felt like I mattered."
Year 8 Student

Support
Resources for
Teachers



Michael Palin Centre: www.michaelpalincentreforstammering.org

STAMMA (UK): www.stamma.org – Advice, training, and teacher guides.

The Stuttering Foundation (US): www.stutteringhelp.org



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Speech & Language
Therapy

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