

Dysfluency Advice Sheet

It may be beneficial to keep a record of your child's dysfluency including when they are dysfluent (time of day), where (different settings) and the type of dysfluency that is occurring. This will identify if there is any pattern to the dysfluency and this will support you in implementing the best strategies to support your child.

Different types of dysfluency include:

- Repetition of whole words, e.g. "and, and, and, then I left"
- Repetition of single sounds or syllables, e.g. "c-c-come h-h-here mu-mu-mummy"
- Prolonging of sounds, e.g. "ssssssometimes I go out"
- Blocking of sounds, where the mouth is in position, but no sound comes out
- Muscle tension - around the eyes, nose, lips, neck, or in arms, legs, chest etc. Extra body movements may occur as the child attempts to 'push' the word out: stamping a foot, shifting body position or finger tapping
- Breathing may be disrupted, for example, the child may hold their breath while speaking or take an exaggerated breath before speaking.

Ways to support your child in the home and across other settings:

- Having a short (5 minutes) one-to-one time with your child on a regular basis, when you are both calm and not in a rush and you are not likely to be interrupted
- Looking at your family's conversations - are you letting each other finish what you want to say? Is anybody talking over your child all the time? Do you interrupt each other when trying to speak?
- Building your child's confidence by focusing on what he/she is doing well and praising them for this
- Thinking about your child's language and whether he/she is trying to use sophisticated words and sentences to express themselves. What kind of language are people using when they talk to them?
- Avoid guessing the word or finishing sentences - it is very tempting, but you may get it wrong or it may just make the person feel cross!
- Use normal eye contact - this doesn't mean fixed staring! We all glance around when we are talking to each other but make sure you also look at the person while you are listening to them
- Listen to what is being said, not how it is being said
- Try to show that you are not in a hurry - a sense of urgency builds tension
- If you are a fast speaker, this adds pressure and speeds up conversations - monitor your own rate of talking and "change gear" if you need to
- Avoid asking direct questions such as "Can you tell me what this is?" and ask more open ended questions such as "Oh look at this ... I think it could be a... what do you think?"