SLT Top Tips for supporting Fluency

Stammering/ Dysfluency is a breakdown in the flow of speech. It can present as:

- Repetitions of individual sounds or whole words,
- Prolongations/stretching out sounds,
- Blocking/getting stuck on sounds,
- Facial tension, extra body movements, disrupted breathing, or
- Avoidance of some words or situations

Research shows that up to 8% of children will experience dysfluency at some point in their lives. It is common for children between the age of 2- 5 years to go through a period of normal non-fluency while their language skills are developing. Many children achieve normal fluency within a few months of starting to stammer but others might need some extra help.

Here are some strategies for helping support your child's fluency:

- If possible, try to have **5 minutes** each day of **one to one time** with your child where you can talk and play together in calm and relaxed setting.

- **Slow down your own rate** of speech and use **short, simple sentences** when you are talking to your child.
• Show your child you are listening and maintain natural eye contact if they are stammering.

• Give them extra time to talk without interruption and avoid finishing off their sentences for them.

• Don’t tell your child to slow down or take a deep breath if they are stammering.

• Try not to ask your child too many questions. Give them time to answer one question at a time and balance your questions with comments during conversation.

• Try to ensure everyone gets a turn to talk during family conversations.

• Give your child praise for the things they are doing well in communication.

• If your child is stammering speak to your Speech and Language Therapist for further advice.

• Useful information and resources can be found at: www.actionforstammeringchildren.org and www.stamma.org