

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Smoother Speech at Home: Helping a Child Who Stammers

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✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Take the pressure off talking, so a child who stammers keeps talking freely and stays confident while their speech settles. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

If your child has started to stammer — repeating sounds, stretching them out, or getting stuck with nothing coming, “b-b-ball”, “mmmmmy”, a long silent push before the word arrives — the most useful thing you can change today is not your child's speech. It is the speed and the pressure of the talking around them. Slow your own talking down, leave a pause before you answer, and stop asking your child to say it again. That is the whole of the first stage below, and for many families it is the stage that does most of the work.

This is stammering, also called stuttering, and in Urdu haklahat or zaban ki laknat. A lot of young children go through a bumpy patch somewhere between two and five, usually at exactly the point where their ideas start racing ahead of the muscles that have to say them. Many settle again without ever needing therapy. Some do not — and nobody, including us, can tell you at the start which group your child is in. So everything here is written to be safe either way, like the rest of

our **free home programs for parents**: none of it can harm a child who turns out not to need help.

One thing we can say plainly, because parents in Multan ask us this almost every week: *haklahat kisi dar, sadme ya jhirak se nahi hoti*. Stammering is not caused by a fright, a shock, a fall, a scolding, or anything you did wrong. It is understood as a difference in the way the brain plans and times speech, and it very often runs in families. What the people around a child can change is not the cause — it is how safe and unhurried talking feels. That part genuinely matters.

This is a supportive, parent-led program. It is not an assessment, and it is not therapy. It is built from the same advice Mahnoor gives families in our own sessions at our centre in Model Town, Multan, written so you can start tonight at the dinner table. Please do book a check as well. With stammering, early guidance is easy to get and genuinely worth having, and the months spent watching and waiting are the ones you can never get back. If getting to Multan is the hard part, we have written separately about how families travelling in from **Lodhran** and **Layyah** make one trip count.

Wait, or ask for a check?

Every child who stammers

Start the stages below tonight. Nothing here can harm a child who settles on their own.



But if any one of these is true

- Lasted more than about six weeks
- Getting worse rather than easing
- Tension, blinking or pushing words out
- Avoiding words, or going quiet
- Began after about three and a half
- Age five or older, or it runs in the family



Ask for a speech-therapy check now

Not in six months. You cannot get those months back.

Nobody can tell at the start which children settle on their own — so a check beats watching and waiting.

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Children who repeat sounds or whole words, or stretch a sound out — “b-b-ball”, “mmmy”.
- ✓ Children who sometimes get stuck, with no sound coming out for a moment.
- ✓ Toddlers in the middle of a fast burst of new words and longer sentences — if your child has very few words at all, start with our home program for getting talking started instead.
- ✓ Children who have started to notice it themselves — swapping words, going quiet, or saying “I can’t say it”.

- ✓ Parents who feel anxious watching their child struggle and want to help, calmly.
- ✓ Grandparents, aunts, uncles and teachers who want one clear rule for what to do when a child gets stuck.
- ✓ Families waiting for, or already seeing, a therapist who want gentle home support in between.

Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Your child shows physical tension or struggle — a tight face, blinking, head movements, or pushing hard to get words out.

Your child has started avoiding words, sounds or talking altogether, or swaps words to dodge a stammer.

The stammer has been there for more than about six weeks, is getting worse rather than easing, or started after your child turned about three and a half. You do not have to watch and wait — ask for a speech-therapy check now.

Your child is five or older and still stammering.

There is stammering in the family, or your child also finds words, sentences or saying speech sounds clearly hard.

Your child seems upset, embarrassed or frustrated about their talking, or has said they hate it.

You have a worried gut feeling — always trust it and ask a therapist for help. If you are not sure how to put the worry into words, our free 2-minute parent check is a quick place to start.

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search “**child speech & language therapist near me**”, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here.**

☆ **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Stage 1 – Slow your own pace

Model an easy, unhurried way of talking. You cannot ask a child to slow down, but you can show them.

Talk to your child a touch more slowly than feels natural, with gentle pauses between phrases.

Let one or two slow seconds go by before you answer them — count them in your head.

Keep your own voice calm and easy, especially in the rush of mornings and bedtimes.

Pick one daily moment — the drive to school, the walk home — and make that your slow-talking time until it becomes a habit.

 **Try** You cannot tell a child to slow down. You can only show it in the **this:** way you speak yourself — and children copy pace long before they copy words.

Stage 2 – What to do the moment they get stuck

Give your child a safe, unhurried place to finish the word themselves.

Stay still, keep your face soft, and hold gentle eye contact while your child works the word out.

Wait. Do not finish the word, do not guess it, and do not fill the silence.

Never say “slow down”, “take a breath”, “start again”, “aaram se bolo” or “phir se bolo”.

When the word arrives, answer what your child said — not how it came out.

 **Try** Your calm silence says “I am listening and we have all the time in the world” far louder than any piece of advice.

Stage 3 – Comment more, ask less

Take the demand out of conversation, so talking stops feeling like a test.

Swap questions for comments — “that lorry is huge” instead of “what colour is the lorry?”

Ask one question at a time, and never fire a second one while your child is still answering the first.

Avoid open questions that need a long answer when your child is tired, excited or unwell.

Never ask your child to perform for guests — no reciting, no “tell uncle what you did today”.

 **Try** A comment invites talking. A question demands it. Children who **this:** stammer usually give you more when you demand less.

Stage 4 – Value the message, not the smoothness

Keep your child confident about talking, whether it comes out smoothly or not.

Respond warmly to what your child told you — the news, the joke, the idea.

Praise the trying, the sharing and the bravery rather than the fluency itself.

Stay exactly as loving and interested on the bumpy days as on the easy ones.

If your child mentions the stammer, answer honestly and calmly: “yes, some words get stuck sometimes. It is alright. I am still listening.”

 **Try** Praising smooth talking on purpose is part of clinician-led programmes **this:** such as the Lidcombe Program. Done alone at home it can make a child watch their own speech, so leave that one to your therapist.

Stage 5 – Special time, and a calmer household

Build a short, daily, no-pressure talking moment and protect the calm around it.

Give five minutes a day of calm, screen-free, one-to-one play — the same time each day if you can.

In special time, follow your child's lead completely: they choose, you join in, you comment, you do not question.

Keep routines predictable. Tired, rushed and hungry children almost always stammer more.

Make sure everyone gets a turn to talk at mealtimes, so nobody has to fight to be heard.

 **Try** Five unhurried minutes of your full attention every day beats an hour of **this:** hurried chatter — and it is the piece parents tell us they notice first.

Stage 6 – Guests, cousins and school

Protect your child in the places where stammering feels most exposed.

Give the adults around your child one sentence they can actually remember: look, wait, and listen to what your child is saying, not how they are saying it.

Stop teasing, mimicking and “helping” by finishing words — kindly, but the first time, and every time.

Tell your child's teacher before there is a problem: no reading aloud on the spot, no being made to answer quickly in front of the class, and extra thinking time.

Keep talking about it openly at home so your child never learns that stammering is a shameful secret.

 **Try** A child copes with the bumps far better than with the feeling that **this:** everyone is politely pretending not to hear them.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Never say “slow down”, “take a breath”, “aaram se bolo” or “phir se bolo” — it adds the exact pressure that makes talking harder.
- ✓ Wait two slow seconds before you answer, and never finish your child’s word for them.
- ✓ Never ask a child who stammers to perform for guests, and never let anyone laugh at, mimic or complete their words.
- ✓ Ask your therapist about structured programmes such as the Lidcombe Program or Palin Parent–Child Interaction therapy. Those are delivered under a therapist’s guidance, never from a web page.
- ✓ Slow your own speech instead. Children take their pace from the people around them, and this single change does most of the work.
- ✓ Comment more than you question — commenting invites talking, questioning demands it.
- ✓ Watch for tension, not for bumps — struggle in the face and body matters far more than how often a word repeats.

How you’ll know it’s working

- ➔ More smooth, easy days — though bumpy days still come and go, because progress with stammering is rarely a straight line.
- ➔ Less tension and struggle in the face, jaw and body when your child talks.
- ➔ Your child still talks freely, joins in and puts their hand up, rather than dodging words or going quiet.
- ➔ Your child seems relaxed about talking and is not upset or embarrassed by the bumps.
- ➔ Bumpy patches still arrive, but they pass more quickly than they used to.
- ➔ You feel calmer too — your own face and pace are part of what your child is reading.



Is this based on real methods? The advice here is the standard guidance given to parents of young children who stammer: slow your own speech, leave pauses, cut down questions, never ask a child to slow down or start again, and respond to what your child said rather than how it came out. You will find the same core advice from the NHS, from speech and language therapy bodies such as ASHA, and from stammering charities such as STAMMA. Stammering is understood as a difference in how the brain plans and times speech, with a strong family link — it is not caused by fright, shock, scolding or parenting. Structured therapies do exist, and the Lidcombe Program and Palin Parent–Child Interaction therapy are two well-established examples, but both are delivered under the guidance of a qualified speech and language therapist and neither should be attempted from a web page. Nothing here is a diagnosis or a substitute for an assessment.



Educational information, not a diagnosis. Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

FAQ

Stammering at Home: questions parents ask

