

'Taking turns to talk'

handout 1 of 2

Think

When my family is together:

Who does most of the talking? _____

Who does most of the listening? _____

Who does most of the interrupting? _____

What can happen when we don't take turns in conversations?

Why might it be helpful for my child who stammers if we all took turns?

Often, in families:

- * Everybody talks at once
- * People interrupt one another
- * No one listens
- * One person does all the talking
- * People are afraid of interrupting the stammering child.



Typical group behaviour!

When this happens:

- * People are not *taking turns*
- * Everyone is competing for time to talk.

It is especially likely if you have a large family where everyone has something to say!

Why would it be helpful to make sure everyone has a turn (including the child who stammers)?

Competing for a turn to talk might make things difficult for the child who stammers:

- * He feels that he must speak quickly in order to get a turn
- * He has less time to think of what he wants to say
- * He has to cope with people interrupting him
- * He may try to interrupt others
- * It is harder for him to be calm and take his time
- * Once he gets his turn he may not want to give it up! So he may talk for too long and not let others have a turn speaking.

Taking turns to talk 2 of 2

What are the rules for good turn-taking?

- ✧ When one person is speaking, others listen
- ✧ No one interrupts
- ✧ Everybody has a turn
- ✧ Vary who gets to speak first
- ✧ No one should speak for too long.

How can I improve my turn-taking?

- ✧ Watch! 👁 Listen! 👂 Wait! 🤚 to ensure that your child has finished speaking before you start to talk
- ✧ Count to two in your head before responding to your child's speech
- ✧ When your child speaks to you, respond either verbally or non-verbally (eg, smiling, nodding).

How can I encourage other members of the family to take turns?

- ✧ Teach everybody in your family the rules of turn-taking:
 - Play games where you have to take turns, for example Snakes and Ladders; Ludo; Snap; Monopoly; building something as a team.
 - Play the Microphone Game.

The Microphone Game

- ✧ Choose something that will be the microphone, eg, a pencil, a wooden spoon
- ✧ Put the microphone in the middle
- ✧ When somebody wants to talk, they pick up the microphone
- ✧ Nobody else can talk or interrupt; they are listening
- ✧ When the speaker has finished, the microphone is put down
- ✧ The next speaker picks up the microphone and takes a turn to talk
- ✧ Everybody has a chance to speak
- ✧ Nobody should take all the turns
- ✧ Nobody should take very long turns.



You can play the Microphone Game at mealtimes or even in the car (except for the driver!).