

Tourettes
action



GUIDELINES FOR USE
presentation for
primary schools



These guidelines have been produced based on a study evaluating the usefulness of this presentation in primary school classes, (click here- www.tourettes-action.org.uk/evaluation-or - for more information about the study's findings). The following ideas emerged as suggestions for people (parents, teachers and children with TS) to know before giving the presentation.

Content by: Dr Claire Nussey, Clinical Psychologist on behalf of Tourettes Action.

Tourettes Action offer free, downloadable presentations to help you explain what Tourette Syndrome is to others at school, work, or elsewhere. The presentations are available at www.tourettes-action.org.uk/ts-presentations/. These guidelines have been developed to help pupils in primary school and their families use the presentation to explain TS to their class-mates, but we hope it will also be helpful to anyone giving a presentation on TS.

Presentations can be scary for many people and you might be worried about how it will go. Here are some questions and worries that people often have:

What if... Common concerns for children and parents:

“I don’t want the other children to know I have Tourette’s”

- Parents can prepare carefully beforehand, so the child with TS is comfortable with the presentation going ahead.
- Letting classmates know can help the child feel more comfortable about having TS and help classmates be more understanding of the child.
- Giving the presentation anonymously (so that classmates learn about TS without knowing that it affects someone in their class) can still be effective.

“I’m worried a presentation will lead to bullying”

- Dr Nussey’s study found that classmates are generally enthusiastic about the presentation and positive about TS afterwards.
- Children with TS often feel more supported by their classmates after the presentation, particularly if they have told them about their TS.
- Bullying is unlikely following the presentation but talking though any concerns with your child’s teacher beforehand may be helpful.

“I’m not sure the teacher will agree to giving the presentation”

- Liaise closely with your child’s teacher in order to set up the presentation.

- Sharing this booklet with them may help them to decide whether they feel able to give the presentation to the class.

But... Common concerns for teachers

“I don’t know enough about Tourette’s to give a presentation to my class.”

- Looking at the presentation along with a little background knowledge about TS is usually enough preparation for the presentation.
- The “Tourettes Action” website has easy to read information about Tourette’s (see <http://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/publications/>) and a helpline you can contact for more information on 0300 777 8427 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

“What do I do if children ask questions that I don’t know the answer to?”

- Is it likely you will be able to answer the questions that classmates ask. If not, it may be that the child with TS will feel able to answer some questions.
- Some common questions classmates ask are about what causes TS (researchers are still working on this!); how it developed initially (unknown); whether the prevalence is the same all over the world (it is); and whether animals can get it (they can’t!).
- Some questions may not have easy answers. You can always tell the children that you will find out the answer and let them know.

“I have a child in my class with TS: is it a good idea to tell the other children that they the condition?”

- Children with TS are often keen for their classmates to know and in these cases it is often very helpful (see “I don’t want the other children to know I have Tourette’s” above.)
- Discuss with the child beforehand what you are going to say. Preparing children in advance that classmates may initially be curious and ask about tics a little bit more could be helpful.
- If the child does not want it disclosed that they have TS, it may still be useful to give a presentation about TS as part of the PSHSE curriculum. However, some classmates may find this a bit confusing or may guess that someone in the class has TS. Giving sufficient explanation at the start of the presentation to cover these eventualities may be helpful.

Ideas for giving the presentation

- The presentation takes about 20 minutes to present, including questions and discussion at the end.
- You may wish to revisit the topic a couple of weeks later or engage in some other activity to reinforce the children's learning about TS and how to behave towards children who have tics or are different in other ways.

Any comments?

- If you have used these presentations, you may like to tell Tourettes Action about your experiences so that they can use this information to help other children with TS. Tourettes Action would also welcome any comments about this leaflet and the presentations, which are also available in versions for secondary schools and for adults.



Thank you to Dr Claire Nussey and to all the families who participated in this project.

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For more information on TS and our services, visit www.tourettes-action.org.uk.

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