

Selective / Situational Mutism

Advice for when children don't talk in some situations



Resources and strategies to tackle SM and lay the groundwork
for successful intervention

This pack also acts as the “handout” for our Webinar

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Why might a child not speak in setting?

Quiet children

- There is nothing wrong with a child being quiet and some people are just more quiet by nature. Some children are quiet because they are shy.

Low or High profile Situational Mutism/Selective Mutism (SM)

- Some children are so anxious about speaking in some situations that they develop a phobia and become unable to speak at all – High Profile SM
- Low profile SM children speak when prompted to but won't initiate interaction with certain people or in certain situations

Speech, Language, and Communication Needs/Difficulties (SLCN)

- There is a huge range of what is “normal” when children are very young and some children might have delayed language skills but catch up and become brilliant communicators as older children and adults
- Others might have a persistent language problem, difficulties with speaking clearly, or another communication problem
- It is important for parents and settings to talk to each other - to investigate if there are concerns at home as well as setting

A “Silent Period”

- It is common for children to have a period of silence when entering a new environment and when this happens for bilingual children this is often called a “silent period”. If this lasts for more than one month, this should be investigated further. Bilingual children are at greater risk of developing selective mutism, where the silence becomes entrenched.
- Parents should continue speaking the languages they feel most comfortable using with their child

Advice for all children

- The advice in this pack will help children including those who at risk of SM, but also those who are a little shy, learning the language, or just settling in... in other words all children will benefit from these techniques!

Confused or not sure?

- Ask us for advice at one of our virtual advice sessions
www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/cyp/therapy/

Selective Mutism: Information poster for settings

There are signs of an increasing number of children who talk happily at home but not in other environments and situations. These children need a careful approach because well-meaning attempts to make them talk can make the situation worse! This can become a serious phobia with long term implications.

You can turn this worrying trend around!

1) Be positive and reassuring

When you notice a child being silent, have a quiet chat. Say you know talking is tricky at the moment, but don't worry because it will get easier! They don't have to talk straight away. Concentrate on having fun and it will gradually get easier to have a go.

2) Build confidence

Focus on building their ability to do non-speaking activities. Give them lots of specific praise and smiles. Do things with them, not for them.

3) Gradually facilitate speech

When the child gestures, respond as if they spoke. Offer choices between two things. Don't ask direct questions, instead chat in the style of running commentary.

4) Seek advice

If a child is silent for more than 6 weeks, contact a speech and language therapist

Please do:

- Accept any means of communication
- Encourage all children to use gestures such as waving greetings or hands up to answer the register
- Make sure parents let a child know if and when they're leaving and that they *will be back later*
- Make comments on what they're doing
- Encourage activities that involve movement or noise/music making.
- Encourage activities that involve talking or singing in unison
- Praise joining in rather than speaking

Please don't:

- Pretend not to understand
- Force the child to say hello/bye and please/thank you etc.
- Advise parents "just slip out when they're not looking"
- Ask lots of questions
- Talk negatively about the child and their silence in their hearing
- Bribe or cajole
- React too much when they *do* speak
- Pressure a child to "join in"
- Do things for them
- Be hurt that the child doesn't speak to you

Suitable children's books:

Penguin by Polly Dunbar • Little by Little by Amber Stewart • Lamb says Boo! By Katherine Sully

For more information see:

- SMIRA www.selectivemutism.org.uk
- Supporting Quiet Children: Exciting Ideas and Activities to Help 'Reluctant Talkers' Become 'Confident Talkers' – Maggie Johnson and Michael Jones (Lawrence Educational)

Examples of short term targets

Agnieszka will be able to respond to the register by raising her hand

Bea will be able to make noises using a musical instrument in a group activity

Charlie will take turns in an activity with his keyworker

Dana will be able to share a piece of news from home by showing a photo or object

Eddie will share a game she has brought from home with a peer

Fred will be able to make a choice at break time by pointing

Gemma will indicate what sound/word she hears by pointing

Hannah will be able to ask to go to the toilet by showing a symbol

Isa will show "good looking" when sitting on the carpet

Note: speech targets are not appropriate as these will increase the pressure on the child

Informal techniques

Commentary style talking

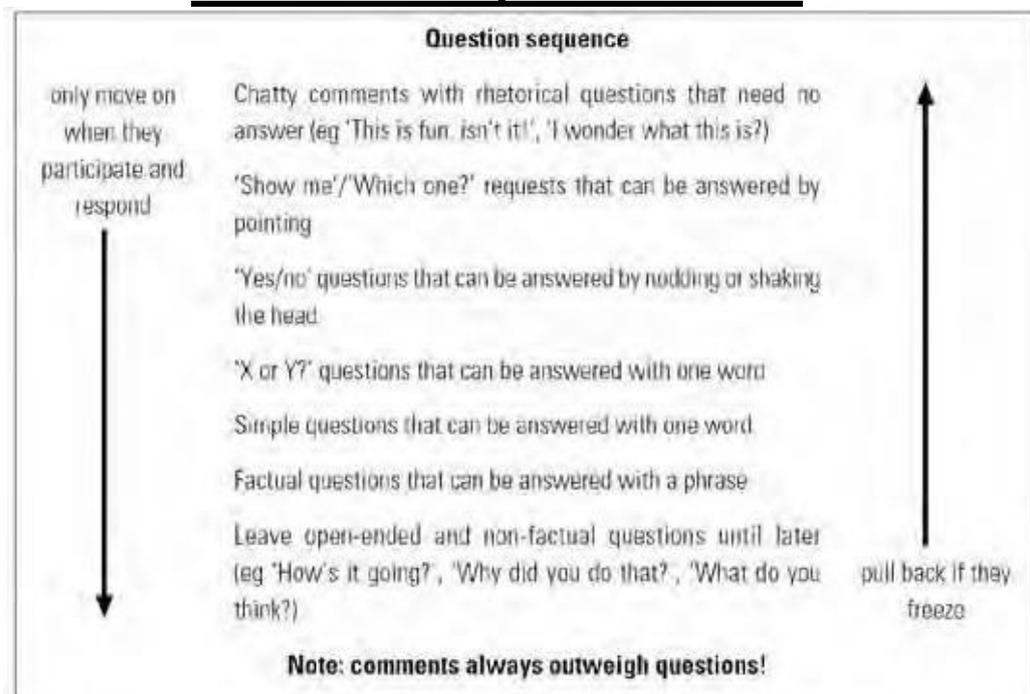
Talk to the child without asking any direct questions that require an answer. Keep talking but don't be afraid of silences. It's good to leave pauses... but don't look at the child when you pause (otherwise it seems like you are waiting for them to respond).

Good phrases and techniques:

- Tag questions that don't need an answer "that looks good, doesn't it?"
- Vague openers "I wonder..." "I expect..."
- Ask yourself questions "oh, where did I put the pencils?"

The aim is to realise that you don't mind them being silent and for them to start interacting by nodding/smiling. Sometimes a few weeks of this technique is enough for the child to feel relaxed enough to speak.

Graded questions



Games and activities

If a child appears “frozen”, choose activities that are likely to interest the child. Follow their lead and make comments instead of asking questions. You can ask someone they are already comfortable with to join in initially to help them to relax, and then gradually withdraw.

Games using movement:

- Make something together
- Take part in a treasure hunt
- Throw and catch a ball
- Play Simon Says (adult saying the instructions)
- Follow the leader
- Copy cat (stress that only those who volunteer will be chosen)

Games using non verbal communication:

- Hide and seek where the child nods or shakes when you say “am I warmer” etc
- Barrier/guessing games where the child nods and shakes to indicate the answer to adult’s yes/no questions
- “What face am I making”: adult makes a face and the child has to find the right picture. Switch roles when the child is comfortable.
- “Guess the action”: take it in turns to act out an action, and the child chooses the picture, then swap roles
- Take it in turns to build a tower in a group (the children must watch to see whose turn it is)
- Turn taking games such as pop up pirate
- Collect a selection of instruments. One child makes a noise while the others cover their eyes. They have to point to the instrument they think they heard.

What to do if concerns continue and the ABCD...

The four most important things to support a child with SM are:

- A) Educate all adults around the child about SM. *See handouts 10a or 10b*
- B) Take the pressure away to talk and change the environment to support the child. *See form 12 and 13*
- C) Let them know that you understand talking is difficult. Have the “Pep Talk” and talk openly about speaking being difficult. *See handout 1.*
- D) Build General Confidence. *See handouts 6, 7, and 8*

The educational setting should also allocate a keyworker to build non-verbal rapport. This person doesn't need to be glued to the child's side but they will need at least 10 minutes with the child or young person three times a week.

Come along to our webinar to learn more about SM and make a plan for next steps (no referral needed). We would encourage school staff and parents to watch/attend the webinar together wherever possible so you can make a plan together.

You can get further advice and a referral to the SM team by booking a slot with a speech and language therapist at the virtual advice session. Please note you will need to have:

- a) Attended the webinar and put in place the advice from this
- b) Discussed and completed the questionnaires on the next pages

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff name:

Relationship to child/job title:

Email address of keyworker and SENCO:

Child's name:

Date:

Have you read and implemented the Selective Mutism Settings Pack? YES/NO* <small>*If "NO" please request this before completing the rest of this form</small>
Has this student spoken to you or other children more/less/the same in the time you have known them?
To what extent have you observed this student talking? (e.g. roll-call, specific activities, interactions with peers and adults, volunteers answers, requests help)
To what extent have you observed this student using writing or non-verbal communication (e.g. nodding, gesture) to participate or communicate with other people?
Generally speaking, how would you rate this student's communication (please underline): (a) inadequate (b) adequate, but minimal (c) adequate
With reference to form D3, what stage of speaking do you feel the child is with their keyworker or person they feel most comfortable with (when 1:1)
To what do you attribute any lack of participation or reluctance to speak?
Please describe this student's general behaviour this term, including any unusual mannerisms. Have these increased or decreased in the time you have known this student?

<p>What adjustments (if any) are in place to support this student's inclusion in your setting?</p>
<p>What speech and/or behaviour targets (if any) do you feel would be appropriate?</p>
<p>Please state help or advice you would like from this service and any other suggestions you would like to make.</p>

D3: the stages of confident speaking:

Stage	Child's presentation	Example behaviours
0	Absent	Stays in their room or observes from a distance
1	Frozen	Sits passively or accepts help without moving
2	Participates without communication	Participates silently e.g. takes items offered, carries out instructions that do not require an answer (draws a picture/deals out cards)
3	Uses non verbal or written communications	Child responds and may even initiate through pointing, gesture, tapping, drawing or writing. Child is relaxed and responds with a variety of facial expressions.
TALKING BRIDGE	Tolerates voice being heard by a bystander	Child talks or laughs with parent/talking partner when others are in the same room.
4	Talks through another person	Child answers when a question is repeated by the parent, talks through another person.
5	Uses voice	Child vocalizes to express emotions or symbolic sounds e.g. "mmm", "brmm", "hmm" If confident reader: reading out loud falls in this category
6	Communicates with single words	Says single words in structured situations
7	Communicates with sentences	Uses sentences in structured situations
8	Conversation	Has an adult led two way conversation
A note on whispering...		Whispering does not count as speaking as it is the avoidance of using voice. Whispering should be recorded as stage 3.

PARENT/GUARDIAN QUESTIONNAIRE

Your name and relationship to child:

Email address:

Child's name:

Date:

Your concerns:

- What concerns do you have about your child?
- How long have you had these concerns?
- Which of these are you most concerned about?

Home and family

- Who lives at home at the moment?
- Any other family members who are important to them?
- What languages are spoken at home? What other languages does your child hear regularly? Which language are they most confident with?
- Is there any family history of speech and language difficulties? Who and what difficulties?
- Is there any family history of anxiety or shyness? Please describe.

Speaking habits

- How much is your child able to speak to close family members at home? Are you concerned about their language skills at home?
- Who does your child speak to freely and easily?
- Is there anyone they talk to a little bit?
- Anyone they cannot talk to at all?
- Are they aware that they have a problem?

How concerned are you about your child's confidence in speaking on a scale from 0-10 (where 10 is most concerned)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Is there anything else you want to add?

Handouts and resources

Please note you will need to have access to these during the webinar training:

- Appendix A: Activities by stage
- Handouts D1-D4: Models and Informal Approaches
- Handout 1: The Pep Talk
- Handout 6: Building Confidence
- Handout 7: Coping with Anxiety
- Handout 8: Coping with Mistakes
- Handout 10a (and 10b): Environment Supports for Primary (and Secondary)
- Form 12 and 13: Environmental checklists for school and home

Further Reading:

- SMIRA www.selectivemutism.org.uk - *the UK charity for SM. Check out their facebook pages too.*
- *A Toolkit for Modern Life* by Emma Hepburn *Great for older children, parents and all of us for considering our thoughts and emotions*
- *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual 2nd Edition* *the go-to resource for SM – this is where these handouts are from!*
- *Selective Mutism In Our Own Words* by Carl Sutton and Cheryl Forrester *Written by adults who have or have had SM*
- *Can I tell you about Selective Mutism* by Alison Wintgens and Maggie Johnson *A brilliant and accessible guide to SM for children, their friends, parents and teachers*
- www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/autistic-fatigue *A good guide to something which can be mistaken for SM, or co-occur with SM. We will discuss this in the training too.*

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP CONFIDENT TALKING

Introduction

The following activities are grouped into the eight stages of one-to-one interaction (see Table 5.1 in Chapter 5). However, they can also be used as small-group or whole-class activities during the generalisation process. Select activities according to the child's age, ability and interests, working from low- to high-risk activities (see Tables 10.6 and 10.9 in Chapter 10).

Key to medium- and high-risk activities

Symbol	Type of activity	Description
E	Emotive content	All activities have familiar factual content, unless indicated by E . Emotive content raises anxiety due to unfamiliarity or uncertainty.
	Child initiates interaction (unprompted)	The child is prompted in all activities, unless indicated by I . When it is the child's turn to ask a question, or give an instruction, ensure that they know what to do but then <i>wait</i> for them to act. Only prompt with a nod and smile or say 'Your turn' if absolutely necessary.
SS	Semi-structured	All activities involve structured turn-taking unless indicated by SS or U . Semi-structured games do not have a fixed turn-taking sequence when played in groups, and the length of each turn is variable. Unstructured turn-taking relies heavily on calling out and spontaneous contributions to maintain balanced participation.
U	Unstructured	
  	Eye contact Physical contact Volume	Certain games may be selected to encourage these aspects of communication.
+	Group activities	Suitable for group work at each stage, eg 6+,7+ .

Key to low-risk activities

Symbol	Type of activity	Description
R	Reading required	Unsuitable for poor or beginner readers.

Providing a greater sense of purpose and enjoyment

Many activities from Stage 3 onwards can be improved by following each successful turn with a token or an action that leads to a pleasing end result. Eg, the child gradually fills a cardboard tube with marbles and pours them down a chute, gains a piece to add to a favourite jigsaw puzzle, or wins a plastic sword, building brick or a throw of the dice, as follows.

Pop-up Pirate® by Tomy

After their turn, the child is given a small plastic sword to push into a slot in the pirate's barrel. The release mechanism is triggered at random to forcefully eject the pirate's head.

Build a tower

After their turn, the child is given a building brick, cotton reel or domino tile to add to a growing tower. How high will it be before it topples over?

Board games

After their turn, the child throws a dice and moves their counter round the board, towards the 'Finish' line.

Stage 1 Helping the frozen child to relax

Choose activities that are known, or are likely, to interest the child, or follow the child's lead at first. Join in their games, expressing enjoyment and using limited commentary, rather than asking questions. If the child is still watching from the sidelines after a few sessions, the parent or someone else the child is comfortable with should be invited to help them enjoy activities in the new setting.

For example:

- * play with a kitten
- * build a garage
- * make a camp or a hideaway
- * paint a picture
- * have a dolls' tea party
- * play with jumping/popping/wind-up toys
- * do jigsaw puzzles or formboards
- * look for marbles buried in sand
- * make a necklace
- * cut out pastry shapes
- * print with stamps and stencils
- * demonstrate a computer game
- * play battery-operated or electronic games.

Stage 2 Helping the child to relax and participate

Invite the child to participate or assist in Stage 1 activities and gradually introduce more interactive activities, for example:

- * make something together (eg a greetings card, a puppet, dinosaur biscuits)
- * make a scrapbook or book called 'My School'
- * go on a treasure hunt
- * throw and catch a ball
- * play board games which use dice, counters or spinners
- * play 'noughts and crosses' (tic-tac-toe)
- * play chess, draughts (checkers) or backgammon
- * learn magic tricks.

Physical movement

The value of physical movement is to both help and see that the child is relaxed from head to toe. Action rhymes, music-and-movement activities and games such as 'Simon Says' are performance- rather than goal-orientated, and often not successful on an individual basis. It is best to use them as group activities, so that inhibited children can join in when they are confident that they will not draw too much attention to themselves. Include small movements and actions which are likely to feel more comfortable for quiet children. Also give them the opportunity to explore and try out equipment outside the main lesson.

Simon Says

2+

This classic game is best played in groups. The adult performs actions, giving a command such as 'Touch your toes!', 'Stand up!', 'Scratch your nose!', and so on. The children copy the adult's actions, but only if the command is preceded with 'Simon says ... ', (eg 'Simon says, put your hands in the air'). If any children copy actions that were not preceded with 'Simon says ... ', they are out of the game.

Follow the leader

2+

All the children line up behind the leader. The leader then moves around and all the children have to mimic the leader's actions. Add noises to some of the actions, just in case the child who has SM feels comfortable enough to do those too.

Copycat

I (only if child volunteers) 2+

The children sit in a circle. One of them is chosen as the leader while a second child (the guesser) waits outside. The child who has SM may dread being picked for either role and it should be made clear at the beginning that only those who volunteer will be chosen. The leader performs actions (the sillier the better!)

which the others must copy, while the guesser stands in the centre of the circle and tries to spot the leader. The followers must be warned not to stare at the leader!

Stage 3 Using non-verbal and written communication

The child is still under no pressure to speak, but some non-verbal communication is now required so that the session can continue. Some games involve mime which is useful as part of a shaping programme. The adult also mimes but should maintain commentary-style talk between their turns so that the sessions are not conducted in silence!

Guessing games

I,®

Prepare two sets of pictures. Spread out one set on the table and place the other face-down in a pile. The child takes a picture from the pile. The adult has to guess what it is and points to the pictures on the table, asking, 'Is it the duck?', 'Is it the tractor?', etc. The child shakes or nods their head in response and hands over the picture to make a pair when the adult gets it right.

This is then reversed and the child guesses by pointing to the upturned pictures. If the adult nods or shakes their head without speaking, the child will need to look at them to see whether they are right or wrong. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up. With older children, the introduction of two or three maximum guesses brings an extra element of fun.

- 2 The child hides an object in the room. The adult guesses where it is by pointing and asking, 'Is it in the cupboard?', 'Is it behind me?', etc. The child responds by shaking their head or nodding. Older children will manage a version of 'You're getting warmer/colder'. As the adult moves around the room, the child can nod when they get nearer, or shake their head if getting further from the object. Some may even use their voice (Stage 5)- 'Mmm' (for 'yes') for getting warmer and 'Uh-oh' (for 'no') for getting colder.

The game is then reversed, with the child pointing or walking around the room. If the adult also nods or head shakes rather than speaks, a lot of natural eye contact will be generated.

No peeping!

Prepare a set of pictures depicting various body parts. The child chooses a picture by pointing to it or holding it up so that the adult can see it. The adult has to find and point to that part of their own body with their eyes tightly shut. A few mistakes (a finger in the ear or up the nose always goes down well!) often make the child laugh for the first time. Then reverse the roles, with the adult selecting and naming a body part for the child to find.

Picture selection

Prepare two sets of matching pictures. Spread out one set face-up on the table and place the other set in a pile, face-down. The adult works through the pile, one picture at a time, and describes each one. The child must find the matching picture to win the pair. Pictures can be chosen that provide an identical match (eg 'a clown with a blue nose') or an association (eg 'bird' goes with 'nest').

What's that sound?

Spread out a selection of pictures. Play a series of sounds and the child identifies each one by pointing to the matching picture. Go to www.freesfx.co.uk to download free sound effects.

Memory game

Spread out a selection of pictures on the table and give a clue for each one; for example, 'This is where I go at night-time', 'A hamster lives in this'. The child turns each picture face-down as they solve the clue. Now repeat the clues and the child sees if they can remember where each picture is. If they turn over the right picture, they keep it; if it's the wrong one, they give it to the adult. This really tests the adult's memory too!

Facial expressions

Both the child and the adult have a matching set of pictures or photographs of facial expressions. The adult takes three pictures and makes each facial expression as they place the pictures face-down in a row. They repeat the sequence, pointing to each card in turn. The child selects the corresponding pictures and places them in a row, face-up, before turning over the adult's cards to see whether they match.

Note: if the child copies any expressions, it's a bonus - *don't ask them to do it.*

Letter, number or shape tracing

tp, 3 or 3+

Prepare a matching set of letters (eg Scrabble® tiles), numbers or simple shapes (straight line, wiggly line, circle, etc). Spread out one set on the table; put the other set in a bag. Players take it in turns to take an item from the bag, place it face-down and then *trace* the character on the other person's upturned palm with their finger, while the other person shuts their eyes or looks away. Can they find the matching item? If it is too ticklish on the palm, try the back of the hand, or trace the character on the person's back.

Choices

tp

When offering a choice of two items, rather than inviting the child to point to the one they want, hold out each palm as you say each choice. For example, say 'Hotdog' (hold out your right palm) 'or burger?' (hold out your left palm). The child then pats your left or right palm to indicate their choice.

Guess the action

I

Two sets of matching action pictures are used, depicting people performing actions that can easily be mimed (eg sawing, cutting, washing, hammering, driving). One set is spread out face-up on the table; the other set is placed in a pile, face-down. The adult selects a picture from the face-down pile and mimes the action; the child sees how quickly they can find the matching picture in the pile. Then reverse roles.

This is a big step towards real communication. At first, the child's gestures may be very small and close to the body (just as whispering may precede speech).

Mime lotto

I

Only one board and one set of pictures are required. The adult gives the child the board and takes the cards, which are placed in a pile face-down on the table. One card is selected, but kept out of sight.

The adult mimes what is on the card and the child points to the matching picture on the board in order to win the picture. Work through the pile of cards and, when the board is full, the game is reversed, with the child miming the pictures for the adult.

Note: this is harder than the previous game because miming objects rather than actions requires an extra step of symbolic representation. It is a more conscious process of communicative intent.

- 2 The same game can be played with any two sets of matching pictures, if appropriate lotto boards are not available. This has the advantage of allowing pictures to be specially selected for their 'mime potential'.

Complete the puzzle

I,®

The picture shapes are removed from a formboard and given to the child. The adult 'requests' them by miming each object, and the child hands over the appropriate piece. The roles are then reversed. Any actions near the face to represent items such as food, drink, hat, spectacles or cat's whiskers will encourage eye contact.

Build a tower

I, @, 3+

This activity works best with a group of four to six people. Each person is given items such as play bricks, cotton reels or dominoes to add to a growing tower. Older children could alternate paper cups with playing cards or stack mah-jong tiles. The adult explains that turns are not in strict rotation, so everyone needs to watch carefully to see when it is their turn to add to the tower.

The adult starts by placing an item in the centre, then looks at and nods at one of the others, to indicate that it is their turn to go next. This person places an item and nods at someone else. Repeat this until the tower topples over!

Draw a person/house/car ...

I,®, 3+

The adult tells the group members what they are going to draw and starts by drawing one part such as a circle for a person's head. The adult then places the paper and pen in the centre of the group and nods at one of the others to indicate that it is their turn. That person adds another component to the drawing, replaces the paper and pen and nods at someone else. Repeat this until the drawing is complete.

Note: children may not initially make eye contact when they nod in this and the previous activity. However, they will need to turn their head towards the appropriate person to make their intention clear. They will certainly need to look at the other group members' faces to spot when it is their turn, so these are good activities for allowing eye contact to develop naturally.

Stage 4 Talking through other people

At this stage, the child allows the adult to hear their voice, but is not required to speak directly to them. Voice recordings and conversations with close friends or family make a useful 'talking bridge'. For example, the child might:

- * record their voice and play it back to the adult
- * play a game with family members with the adult present
- * work in a pair with a classmate within earshot of the adult
- * talk in unison with another child
- * play a turn-taking game where they talk to a friend or parent, rather than the adult.

Activities from Stages 6 and 7 will therefore be suitable in certain contexts, plus any of the following suggestions.

Whispering game

4+

This classic communication game must be played in a group, with the child who has SM sitting next to someone they talk to freely in private. Sentences or messages are written on cards. The adult selects a card and whispers the message to the child next to them. The message is passed round the group until it reaches the last child who says the message aloud. This is compared with the original message to see whether it has been distorted, often with amusing results! Different children can take it in turns to start off the game.

Four corners

4+

This is the whispering game without the whispering. A child stands in each corner of the hall or playground and runs on to the next child to pass the message on. This can be presented as a *memory* rather than a talking game, but make it clear that there is no need to whisper.

Chanting in unison with peers

4+

Ask the group, including the child who has SM, to say any of the following in unison.

- * Number sequences: counting up in multiples of one, two, five or ten.
- * Days of the week
- * Months of the year
- * Letters of the alphabet
- * Rhymes and songs
- * Repeated lines from familiar stories

Voice recordings

Suitable recording devices for the next two activities include Talking Tins, Talking Postcards and Language Master®cards (see Appendix F, 'Talking resources'). The third activity needs just one device, so a tape recorder, smartphone, tablet or computer could also be used.

Talking hide-and-seek

Hide one of the child's favourite toys and play a series of recorded clues that lead to it by telling the child where to go next. For example:

- * Look in the garden shed.
- * Go to the smallest room in the house.
- * Look under your bed.

Then it is the child's turn to hide the toy and set some clues for you!

Treasure hunts

The adult records a series of simple clues. The child listens to the first clue and records the answer without the adult present. If correct, the child and the adult go to that place and find another clue. This is repeated until a prize is found. This is a good activity for talking in different places. For example:

- * This room is where we have lunch.
- * Where do I keep the stars?
- * What's our class hamster called?
- * What colour is your games bag?

To make it even simpler, the adult can record statements that the child has to respond to by recording 'Yes' or 'No', or 'True' or 'False'. For example:

- * We have lunch in the classroom.
- * The stars are kept in the drawer.
- * Our hamster is called George.
- * Your games bag is red.

Beat the clock

The child hides one to five objects around the room and records the places to look. The adult then listens to the recording and has one minute to find them.

Turn-taking games with an existing talking partner

4+

Single-word Stage 6 games are played in strict rotation, so that the child who has SM only needs to talk to their parent or a friend, and is not required to respond directly to the new adult. Suitable activities include 'Pairs', 'Association Pairs' and letter, number or shape tracing'.

When the child can speak comfortably to their parent or friend, the order is reversed, so that they address the new adult. They may not make eye contact with the new adult at this stage but don't request this -

wait to see if it develops naturally. When the child's talking partner leaves the game, the child is working at Stage 6 level, having bypassed Stage 5.

Stage 5 Using voice to make sounds or read aloud

The Stage 5 activities can be bypassed unless the child is using a shaping or reading approach to elicit speech.

Sounds

Several of the following activities do not require voice but are included to help the child gradually work towards using their voice. There is a certain order of sounds that children will feel most comfortable with: the greater the articulatory effort, and the closer the child perceives the sound to resemble actual speech, the more anxiety they experience. The order is roughly as follows, with the easiest first. However, it is mainly younger children who enjoy the animal and object sounds. Note that voice is used only in sounds 7-9 and 12-15.

- Percussion instruments that make quiet sounds with small movements (eg triangle).
- 2 Instruments that require blowing and sucking (eg recorder, mouth-organ, whistle).
- 3 Percussion instruments that make loud sounds with large movements (eg drum, cymbal).
- 4 Body sounds not involving the mouth (eg clapping, tapping).
- 5 Sounds made with the mouth but no voice required (eg blowing, whistling, tongue-clicking, popping cheeks with a finger).
- 6 Sounds that represent an animal or object and do not require voice (eg hissing for a snake, 'shh' for a sleeping baby, tongue-clicking for a horse, wind blowing, creaking door).
- 7 Noise-makers that require humming (eg kazoo, comb and paper).
- 8 Sounds using voice that represent animals or objects (eg car engine, telephone ring, dog barking, lion roaring).
- 9 Animal noises or other sounds that are represented in word form (eg 'moo', 'baa', 'ping', 'woof').
- 10 Whispered letter sounds not involving voice or lips ('s', 'sh', 'h', 't', 'k', 'ch').
- 11 Whispered letter sounds involving lips but not voice ('f', 'p').
- 12 Letter sounds - adding voice to whispered sounds (eg 'pu', 'tu', 'ku').
- 13 Letter sounds involving voice but not lips ('d', 'g', 'n', 'l', 'j', 'y', 'z').
- 14 Letter sounds involving voice and lips ('b', 'm', 'v', 'w').
- 15 Vowel sounds (eg 'a', 'e', 'i', 'ar', 'ee', 'oo').

Musical instrument copycat

I

The child does not need to use their voice until the kazoo is introduced (see below). The child and the adult take it in turns to identify various noise-makers when the sounds are made out of sight. If a matching set is available, leave one set visible and use the other one to make sounds behind a screen (placing them in a large box tipped over on its side works just as well). If only one set is available, each person turns away or shuts their eyes and then copies with the same instrument, rather than using their own set.

Initiation is best encouraged by each person being the sound-maker three times consecutively before swapping round. For a harder and increasingly physical version of this activity, make two or three sounds in sequence for the other person to remember and copy.

Add a kazoo when the child is confidently making sounds by blowing and sucking.



Musical instrument conversations

I, 5+ A

group of children create a 'conversation' of sounds using the instruments from the previous activity. One child plays a few notes or sounds and then looks at another person in the group to continue. Try to create different 'moods', eg happy, sleepy, angry, secretive.

Hand Snap!

hand, I, 5+

The child does not need to use their voice for this, so it is a good introduction which helps them get used to making a noise. Use any pack of cards which have pictures repeated several times. Normal playing cards will do.

Shuffle and deal out all of the cards. Each player places a card on a central pile in turn and, as soon as two matching cards are played consecutively, the first person to knock on the table wins the cards. For a more physical variation, claim the cards by covering the pile with one or both hands. This may be too invasive if children are particularly 'frozen' or oversensitive to touch.

Silly noises

Experiment with coughing, sneezing, panting, whistling, tongue-clicking, blowing raspberries and popping cheeks!

Puppet play

Play a silly sentence game with glove puppets. The adult's puppet 'reads out' sentences such as 'Fish can swim' and 'Cats can ride bicycles'. The child's puppet responds with a squeak for 'Yes' and 'Uh-oh!', with their lips together, for 'No' (like the buzzer noise used for a wrong answer in the television game show *Family Fortunes*).

Sound lotto

Play like 'Mime lotto' in Stage 3 but choose or make pictures that can be represented by sound. For example, a burst tyre ('pssss'), car, train, telephone, bell, gun, water, creaking door. Choose sounds that do not require voice initially.

Animal noises

Adapt Stage 3 activities such as 'lotto' and 'Complete the puzzle' by choosing animal pictures and making animal sounds, rather than using gesture.

Visual feedback

Producing sounds can be made more fun by providing some form of visual feedback, as follows.

Sound-activated toys

The child makes a noise to make something happen. Find toys that respond to sound. For example, we have found a worm that rises out of an apple, a dog that turns somersaults, and a flower that sways from side to side. After a while, make a rule that sounds are made from the throat - loud sighs are a good start.

Move the sound gauge (eg on an audio recorder, a computer recording device)

Any noise will do at first! Then see which letters of the alphabet have most effect.

Computer visualisations (eg Microsoft®Windows Media Player)

Spectacular displays are possible when making even short sounds into a microphone and children can be encouraged to experiment with different visualisations. (Alchemy-Random is our favourite!)

Letter sound challenge

- * Which letter sounds will blow out the candle? ('p' and a very hard 'h')
- * Which letter sounds move the tissue or feather across the table? ('p', 't', 'k', 'f', 'sh', 'h').
- * Which letter sounds get a response from the sound-activated toy?
- * Which letter sounds make the best visualisations? (see above)

Tactile feedback

Whispered sounds are made by airflow alone, but voiced sounds are made when the vocal cords vibrate. This vibration can be felt against your fingertips, when placed at the base of your throat over your 'voice-box', or as a tickle in your lips when humming against a balloon, no matter how quietly you speak.

Encourage children to produce sound as they breathe out (lips together or only slightly apart is fine) and feel the vibration as they 'switch their voice-box on'.

Humming



Take it in turns to 'Guess that tune', playing with a kazoo or a comb and paper. The child will need to either write down or select their answer. Progress gradually to humming without using the comb or the kazoo.

Letter sounds - copying, recalling or recording

Follow the order suggested at the beginning of this section. At first, the child may find it easier to record the sound with the adult outside the room. Talking Postcards and Language Master®cards are useful for adding sounds to a letter of the alphabet or a classroom phonic picture.

Stopwatch

Who can say 't' 10 times the fastest? Then try other sounds such as 'k', 'l', 'p'.

Reading aloud

5 or 5+

Reading standard text aloud does not involve communication: the individual is not responsible for the choice of words and no messages are exchanged with the listener. Therefore, many older children can read aloud before they can speak freely, provided that the material is well within their reading age. Reading aloud can lead to relaxed communication by gradually introducing taking turns. See the games below, then progress to Stage 6 and 7 activities involving written questions or prompts, before fading out text completely.

The following reading activities are suitable for using one-to-one, in groups and, eventually, in the classroom.



Until children report that they are comfortable with reading aloud in class, ensure that they are forewarned and have a chance to look at the text beforehand.

Word dominoes

R

Preparation

Take a pack of small index cards, or cut out similar-sized cards, and divide each with a line, as shown below. Write a word on each side of the line while making a large rectangle of 16-20 cards. The word on the right-hand side of one card must link to a word on the left-hand side of another. Eventually, the last card will link to the first one.

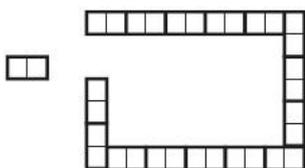
Examples of possible links

Characters: Pooh-Tigger; Bart-Homer Simpson; Beauty-Beast.

Animal babies: elephant-calf; swan-cygnets; fox-cub.

Sports terms: badminton-shuttlecock; tennis-deuce.

Past tense verbs: sit-sat; go-went; think-thought.



How to play

Shuffle the cards, deal out four each and place the remaining cards face-down in a central pile. The first player chooses a card to play and reads out both words. If the next player has a match to either of these words, they place their card so that it links to the corresponding word and read out the two words that belong together. If they don't have a match, they say 'Pass' and take the top card from the central pile. Repeat until all of the cards are played or until one player has placed their last card.

Silly sentences

R

Phrases for people, actions and places are written on cards, shuffled and placed in three piles. Players take it in turns to turn over three cards and read out the silly sentence. For example:

* The postman boiled an egg in a handbag.

* My teacher fell in a puddle, wearing a pair of pyjamas.

Reading pairs

R

The first lines of well-known nursery rhymes are written on card, cut in half, and placed face-down on the table. Players take it in turns to turn over and read out two cards, until they make a matching pair which they keep. Cards that don't match are returned to the central pool. For example:

Baa baa Black Sheep	sat on a tuffet	X
Little Miss Muffet	have you any wool?	X
Little Jack Horner	sat in the corner	

This can be adapted for older children with facts or definitions. Make sure there are some funny possibilities such as 'Prince Charles is the largest British mammal'!

The Moon is	the capital city of England	X
London is	about 384,400 km away	X
The red deer is	the largest British mammal	

Pot the Lobster (Crossbow Education Ltd, ages 7 to adult)

R

With a couple of small tweaks, this rummy-based card game is ideal for children with SM who read well. The players take and discard cards until they have a set of cards that make a silly sentence. As an extra clue, correct sequences produce a picture of a lobster.

Easy version

Read the sentence out loud to win the game.

Harder version

E

After reading out the sentence, the child turns the cards face-down and must remember it for another round. When it is their turn again, the child must say their sentence from memory. Finally, turn the cards back over to reveal the sentence and score one point per word correctly remembered.

Vocabulary Sentence Rummy (Crossbow Education Ltd, age 7-adult)

R

Another card game played with the enjoyable rummy format. See Crossbow's website for ideas on how to make more reading rummy games: www.crossboweducation.com/Rushall's-inclusion-zone/Get-in-the-zone/teaching-with-rummy

Telling jokes

R, E

Children bring in jokes from party crackers, comics or joke books to read out loud to the class or group. Then everyone votes for the funniest joke. 'Knock-knock' jokes are a good format to introduce interactive turn-taking.

Reading from a shared text **R**

Participants take it in turns to read aloud a line from a poem or one or two sentences of text. Other languages appeal to some children as it makes them feel on a more equal footing with their peers. Also, there is not the same association with conversation in their own language.

Play readings **R**

The participants each take on a different character from the script of a play. Then they swap roles.

Narrator **R**

The child is the narrator in a class activity or a school assembly and reads out loud from a script.

Spokesperson **R, E**

The class members work in small groups to produce, for example, a list of pros and cons for a proposed school rule, or three things that work well and three that could be improved in something they have designed. The child is the designated spokesperson for their group and reads out the list, while another class member fields any questions.

Reading own work **R, E**

The child reads out bullet points from either a PowerPoint presentation which they have prepared or a good example of creative writing.

Questionnaires **R, I**

The child prepares and presents a questionnaire to peers or staff members, reading the questions from a clipboard and recording their answers. The participants will need to agree in advance because, at this stage, the child will be unable to get their attention and explain. It will then be up to the child to approach each person, and they should aim to end the interaction by saying 'Thank you'.

Stage 6 Using single words to communicate**Silly or sensible? (es' or'No' questions)**

Young children seem to find the visual images generated by this activity hilarious! It can be adapted to any age or vocabulary level.

Write the questions on cards and select them from a pile or bag. Let the child know how many they are required to answer before starting. Don't put the card down and select another until the child answers: nodding and shaking their head is not allowed! Older children can do this as a timed activity: how many cards can they get through in one minute?

Below is a selection of questions to begin with but the list is endless. (A good ice-breaker question is 'Do noses run?!')

Examples of yes/no questions (select according to age and ability)

- * Do pencils eat?
- * Do babies cry?
- * Do dogs bark?
- * Do cats fly?
- * Do flowers dance?
- * Do children eat?
- * Do pencils sing?
- * Do elephants read?
- * Do cars swim?
- * Do trains rush?
- * Do teachers talk?
- * Do footballs roll?
- * Do biscuits break?
- * Do frogs jump?
- * Do carrots run?
- * Do spaceships walk?
- * Do policemen drive?
- * Do parents work?
- * Do mice squeak?
- * Do centipedes crawl?
- * Do parrots paint?
- * Do stones float?
- * Do blades cut?
- * Do rulers measure?
- * Do rocks burn?
- * Do volcanoes erupt?
- * Do sausages chuckle?
- * Does lipstick melt?
- * Do mirrors dream?
- * Do icicles pout?
- * Does nitrogen freeze?
- * Do stethoscopes amplify?

Extend the activity by taking it in turns to read out and answer the questions.

R**Pick a sweet**

Ask the child to choose a sweet by naming the colour of it. And keep a toothbrush handy!

Pairs**I**

Spread out one set of cards is, face-down, on the table, and place an identical set face-down in a pile. Take it in turns to select a card from the pile and tell the other person what they need to find. If they find the matching card, they keep the pair. If they turn over the wrong card, they replace it and the original card goes back to the bottom of the pile. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up.

There are many suitable cards available such as Animal Snap! but be sure to choose pictures that can be described with a single word. You can also make your own cards with stamps, stickers or photographs, for example:

colours	animals	modes of transport	classmates
cartoon characters	familiar objects	actions (verbs)	food

Association Pairs**I**

One set of cards is spread out, face-up on the table, and a matching set is placed face-down in a pile. Take turns to select a card from the pile and tell the other person what you have. The other person finds the pair and removes both cards. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up.

There are many suitable cards available but you can also make your own. Choose one type of association at a time, for example:

Opposites: long and short	Paired objects: needle and thread
Homophones: flour and flower	Colours: sun and buttercup
Occupations: doctor and stethoscope	Classification: ruler and thermometer

Older children can play the same game with written words, rather than pictures.

R

Finish the sentence

Sentence completion is a good precursor to answering questions because it taps into more automatic, rote-learned language. Younger children can work with pictures; older children (and adults) can work with numbers and phrases.

Pictures

A selection of pictures is spread out on the table and the adult cues in each one with an unfinished sentence, for example:

- * 'At night-time I go to ...?'
- * 'I drive a ...?'
- * 'Birds make nests in ... ?'

The child picks up and names the corresponding picture to finish the sentence. Later, the adult sets a target to clear the pictures within a certain time limit, using an egg-timer or a stopwatch.

Numbers

This is a useful follow-up to rote-counting. The adult cues in the child with sentences that can be finished with a number, being careful to match the information to their general knowledge. For example:

- * 'Two and two make ... ?'
- * 'Insects have six legs but spiders have ...?'
- * 'Clickety-click, sixty ... ?'
- * 'The number that comes after eight is ... ?'
- * 'At midnight the clock strikes ... ?'
- * 'The prime minister lives at number ... ?'

Make it feel like a reading activity by giving the child the numbers in random order.

R

The child then finds and either crosses off or removes each number as they say it.

Automatic phrases

Cue in the individual with phrases that are well known to them and ask them to supply the last word. For example:

- * 'It's raining cats and ...?'; 'I'm feeling on top of the ...?'
- * 'Socks and ...?'; 'Bread and ...?'; 'Thunder and ...?'
- * 'As cool as a ...?'; 'As brave as a ...?';
- * 'A loaf of ...?'; 'A cup of ...?'; 'A flock of ...?'

Alternatively, choose a theme such as football teams, famous buildings or song titles. For example:

- * 'The Eiffel ...?'; 'The Leaning Tower of ...?'; 'Canterbury ...?'
- * 'Blackburn ...?'; 'Leeds ...?'; 'Wolverhampton ...?'
- * 'Away in a ...?'; 'Hark the herald angels ...?'

Picture naming on demand

I

1. Place picture cards face-down on the table. Take turns at turning over a card, naming what is in the picture and 'posting' the card in a pretend postbox.
2. Spread out picture cards face-up. Take turns at naming a picture that the other person has to find and post. This could be a timed activity to 'beat the clock'.
3. Adapt (1) and (2) to be reading activities with words on the cards.

R

What's that sound?

E

Play a series of sounds and ask the child to identify each one to win the matching picture. (Go to the website www.freesfx.co.uk to download free sound effects.) Choose sounds that can be described with one word initially (eg cat, hammer), then gradually include sounds that could take the child to Stage 7 (eg baby crying, dripping tap, man laughing).

Feely bag

E

Place an item in a cloth bag and ask the child to identify it by touch alone.

Bingo or lotto

I

Use a traditional game board with numbers or pictures on it. First, the adult is the caller and continues until the child has filled up a board. Then the child calls for the adult.

Snap!

I

See Hand Snap! at Stage 4 but play using the traditional rules, the child calling out 'Snap!' when two identical cards are played consecutively.

Note: many children can play this with an adult but they have great difficulty being the first to call out in a group. It is then better initially to find group activities with a fixed turn-taking sequence and no time-pressure.

Letter, number or shape tracing



E

Repeat the Stage 3 activity but with only one set of letters (eg Scrabble® tiles), numbers or simple shapes, which are placed in a bag. Rather than identifying the selected character by either pointing to it or picking it up, each player says what they think the other person has traced on their palm.

I-Spy and Colour I-Spy



E

Traditional I-Spy is played with letter names or sounds, while Colour I-Spy is played with colours. To make it more accessible to younger children. For example, 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'C' or '... something that's blue'.

At Stage 6, the adult says, 'You spy with your little eye, something that's ...', to keep the activity at a single word level. At Stage 7, the child also says the opening sentence.

Questions requiring a single-word answer

The adult asks a question either about a picture card (hidden from the child's view) or from a list. The child wins the card for a correct answer, or receives a token as suggested at the beginning of this appendix in 'Providing a greater sense of purpose and enjoyment'. The child says 'Pass' if they are stuck and the adult gets the card or token. There is a selection of questions opposite but the list is endless.

Reading aloud with questions

R

After reading out a short passage of text, the child answers one to four questions that can be answered by a single word found in the text.

Tell Me Quiz (Rockets Toys, age 6 to adult)

R, E

The child answers a question, read to them by the adult, beginning with the letter they get when they spin the wheel. Questions are divided into two sets for different ages. You can make your own version by writing questions on cards which are placed in a central pile and choosing letters from a bag (eg Scrabble® tiles). Children do seem to love the spinner though!

Extend this activity by taking it in turns to read out and answer the questions.

R, I, E

Solve it

E

The adult gives clues about an animal, a classmate or an object, and the child has to see how quickly they can think of the answer. For example, the answer could be a word or a picture on a card, which the child wins when they answer successfully.

Picture clues

I, E

The players take turns at picking up a word or a picture from a central pile. They must now draw it, adding one component at a time until the other player recognises it and says the word or picture on the card.

Examples of questions for single-word answers (select according to age and ability)

Numbers		Colours	
How many ... have I/you got?	eyes	What colour is/are .. ?	grass
	necks		snow
	noses		blood
	hands		the sky
	fingers		daffodils
	legs		the sun
	toes		carrots
How many legs has a ... got?	horse		emeralds
	spider		rubies
	penguin		sapphires
	kangaroo		bananas
	fish		crows
How many:	wheels on a bicycle?	Personal facts	E
	socks in a pair?	What's your name?	
	days in the week?	How old are you?	
	months in a year?	How old is your brother/sister?	
	hours in a day?	What is his/her name?	
	numbers on a dice?	What is your door number?	
	sides on a square?	How many people live in your house?	
	sides on a triangle?	What is your teacher's name?	
	sides on a rectangle?	What is the name of your pet?	
	cards in a pack?	What colour is your car?	
Functions	E	Animals	E
What do you ...	sleep in?	What can ...	swim?
	write with?		fly?
	cut with?		gallop?
	throw?		bark?
	wear on your feet?		squeak?
	wear on your head?		make a nest?
	ride?		make a burrow?

Note: questions become increasingly difficult when:

E

- * there is more than one answer
- * the child is not sure that you will understand them
- * an assumption has been made (eg that they have a pet)
- * the child does not know the answer.

Classification games

Children pick a card and say which family it belongs to. This can be done very simply by sorting any pack of picture cards into groups (eg 'jumper'= clothes, 'potato'= vegetable). Or play it as a game with a theme, for example:

- * a shopping game where the children have to decide which shop to go to for each item on their list
- * a house game where the furniture needs sorting into different rooms.

2 Children select a category and then think of an item that belongs to it. **E**

As the game gets harder, they have to think of two or three items (good preparation for Stage 7). See below for some starter items - there are lots more!

animals	birds	buildings	clothes
colours	countries	desserts/puddings	drinks
films	flowers	food	footwear
fruit	jewellery	lessons	musical instruments
occupations	pets	rivers	tools
towns	toys	transport	vegetables

Favourites **E**

As for 'Classification games' but, when picking a category, the children have to state their favourite colour, drink, teacher, and so on.

Alphabet Strings **E**

Each person takes turns at adding a word to the string; each new word must begin with the last letter of the previous word. Repeats are not allowed. Make it harder with a theme and say 'Pass' if stuck. For example:

- * names: Edward, David, Dana, Amin ...
- * food: potato, orange, egg, granola ...

Passing on a message **I**

The child is asked to find out something from an obliging adult by taking them a written message; for example, 'Please tell Jack how many exercise books you need'. If the child has difficulty approaching, the obliging adult asks whether they need anything and answers the question verbally when the child hands over the piece of paper: for example, 'Please tell [name] I need six books'. The child returns to the original adult and tells them the answer.

When the child is comfortable with this, explain how to get the obliging adult's attention; for example, by knocking on the door, or walking up to them and holding out the note.

Hangman (depending on age and ability)

I

The child thinks of a word and writes down the corresponding number of blank spaces. The adult tries to work it out by suggesting different letters of the alphabet. If correct, the child writes the letter in the appropriate space; if not, a section is added to a sketch of gallows. If the child completes the gallows, the adult loses. Then swap roles and repeat.

Battleships

I

The object of the game is to sink your opponent's fleet before they sink yours. Each player has a 10 x 10 square on which they fill in the squares to depict various vessels (see Handout A1 on page 478). A second 10 x 10 square is used to record the hits and misses when attacking the other player.

Players take it in turns to target one of their opponent's squares, hoping that they will score a direct hit. When successful, they are told what type of vessel has been struck, and this helps guide their next 'missile'.

This is great fun, and a useful lead into Stage 7, as the child is actually saying two 'words' together as they name the squares ('04', 'E9', etc). In response, single words only are required ('hit', 'miss', 'submarine', 'tanker', etc).

Turn up the volume



Play games such as Alphabet Strings, Hangman and Battleships, sitting either back-to-back or on opposite sides of the room. The child will need to raise their voice when the adult says 'Pardon?', 'Sorry, I didn't hear that', etc.

Have some blowing practice first because it takes relaxed shoulders, a deeper breath and more 'push' from the lungs to increase volume - the effort does not come from the throat. For example:

- * Blow enormous bubbles and long streams of bubbles with bubble solution and a wand.
- * Blow the upturned cardboard tube from the inside of a toilet roll along the table. (It takes skill and breath control not to knock it over!)
- * Play blow-football with a table-tennis ball or scrunched-up ball of tissue paper.

Group turn-taking

6+

When introducing new people and increasing the group size, stick to a fixed turn-taking sequence initially. Repeat familiar Stage 6 single-word activities or Stage 5 reading games which the child plays well on a one-to-one basis. Each child will be prompted by the adult in turn.

For turn-taking sequences where children talk to the person *nextto* them, rather than the adult, use Stage 6 activities such as 'Pairs', 'Association Pairs', 'Silly or Sensible?', 'Tell Me Quiz', 'Alphabet Strings' and letter, number or shape tracing', plus the following activities.

Handout A1 BATTLESHIPS

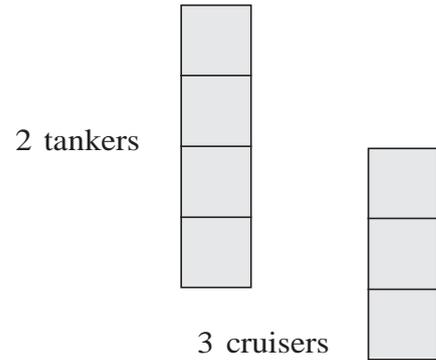
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

Add to grid:



1 battleship

D 5 submarines



2 tankers

3 cruisers

BATTLESHIPS!

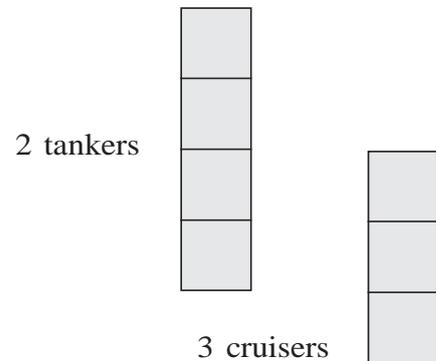
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

Find and sink:



1 battleship

D 5 submarines



2 tankers

3 cruisers

Rote sequences

6+

Counting drills

Take it in turns to say a number, counting up in multiples of one, two, five or ten. Continue the sequence to an agreed number and then repeat it in the opposite direction.

All change!

Working with rote sequences (such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year or letters of the alphabet), the adult tries to catch out the next person by raising a hand or crossing their legs to indicate a change of direction.

Random turn-taking

I, @

This activity needs at least four participants. Working with rote sequences such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year or letters of the alphabet, each person says one item and indicates the person to go next by looking at them and nodding. At first, children often nod *after* they speak but, as they speed up, the activity more closely approximates conversational gesture, with the aim of speaking and nodding at the same time. Only a very small nod is needed, with the emphasis on a natural increase in eye contact.

The longest sentence in the world

E, 6+

Each person adds a word to a sentence to set a 'world record'. There is only one catch - the word 'and' can only be used once!

Name throwing

6+

This is a good warm-up activity, which helps participants to connect at a social level. Whoever starts points to someone else in the circle. If this is done with the left hand, the person pointed to says the name of the person on their left, and vice versa. Then it is their turn to point to whoever they choose. Aim to play for 30 seconds without a mistake, and then everyone swaps places.

Pictionary™ (Mattel Gomes, age 8 to adult)

I, E, U, 6+

This is a drawing game in which players take turns drawing a word while the other players in their team call out to guess what it is within one minute.

Reading will be required so they know what to draw, unless picture prompts are used.

Stage 7 Using phrases or sentences to communicate

Many of the activities in Stage 7 are extensions of Stage 6 activities, and lead on from a single-word activity, almost in the same breath. Ensure that there is a balance of activities, so the child both responds to questions and initiates, by asking questions and giving clues or directions. There is an increasing emphasis on more emotionally charged questions where the child does not have an answer or cannot be certain that their answer is correct.

Pick two sweets

This is a very gentle introduction to combining words. The child chooses two sweets from a selection by saying the colours. Saying 'X, Y' may naturally lead them to say 'X and Y'. Keep a toothbrush handy!

Colour sequences

I

The child says three or more single words together as a lead into phrases and sentences. Players each need a tub of plastic interlocking cubes. Take it in turns to make a colour sequence of three cubes initially, and keep it hidden while describing it to your partner, eg 'Red, blue, blue'. The other player has to make the same sequence, and keeps both sequences if they match. This is a good incentive to catch out your partner with a sequence that is too long for them to remember!

'Yes' or 'No' questions

R, I

This is mainly a reading exercise but the children make up the questions themselves, which is good preparation for Stage 7 communication. Before the game starts, both child and adult write down three to five questions about each other which can be answered 'Yes' or 'No' (finding out each other's likes, dislikes and habits works well). The pieces of paper are folded up and put in the middle of the table or in a bag. Then take it in turns to select a question and read it out for the other person to answer. For example:

- * 'Do you watch [name of television programme]?'
- * 'Have you got a pet?'
- * 'Do you like spiders?'
- * Can you swim?

The children may introduce questions which can't be answered by 'Yes' or 'No' - accept this without comment as it moves into the next activity, 'Pot-luck questions'.

Pot-luck questions

R, I, E

Play as above but now anything goes! Ask the children to write down questions that start with words such as 'Who', 'What', 'Where', 'When' and 'How'. These usually require more than a single-word answer.

For example:

- * What is your favourite television programme?
- * How far can you swim?
- * Where do you live?

Fish for pairs

I

Extend the Stage 6 'Pairs' activity by dealing out five to seven playing cards each and putting the remaining cards face-down in a central pile. If players can make a pair, they put it on the table and play with the remaining cards in their hand.

Then the first player requests a match for one of their cards by asking, 'Have you got ____?'. If the second player has this card, they must hand it over, and the first player may request another item. If the second player does not have the requested card, they say 'No', which signals the end of the first player's turn. The first player now picks up the top card from the central pile to add to the cards they are holding; if it gives them a pair, they put it on the table immediately. It is then the second player's turn to request a card. Continue until one player has paired up all of their cards.

Lotto

I

Take it in turns to be the caller. Use boards or selections of cards with similar pictures so that the child will have to expand the description before the picture can be identified. For example, 'the *happy clown*', 'the boy *with red trousers*', 'the bird *in the tree*'.

I-Spy and Colour I-Spy

I, E

See Stage 6 for instructions.

'Yes', 'No' or 'I don't know' questions

E

Ask a selection of simple 'Yes/No' questions such as 'Is grass green?' and 'Is snow black?', but mix in a few questions that the child could not possibly know the answer to. For example:

- * Is my middle name Fred?
- * Have I got a tissue in my pocket?
- * Is my birthday in June?
- * Was the school built in 1972?

Later, mix in questions that are simply too difficult, to give the child practice at responding appropriately. Stress that it's OK not to know the answer. For example:

- * What's 35 times 126?
- * How deep is the Atlantic Ocean?
- * Where will you be living 20 years from now?
- * How do you say 'tickle' in French?

Yes! No! Game (Paul Lamond Games, age 8 to adult)

R, I

This game involves answering in phrases and is great practice to expand on simple 'yes' and 'no' answers which can sound rather blunt or uninterested. The game includes a series of question cards and a bell. One player reads out the questions, the faster the better to trip up the other player. The other player must answer them *without saying* 'Yes' or 'No'. When they do, swap roles and repeat the game.

Finish the sentence**R**

Use easy sentences which the child has to read aloud, supplying the missing word. For example:

For breakfast I had ___	A hat goes on your _ .
My eyes are _ _	A boot goes on your _
My hair is _ _	. A
Today it is ___ _	car goes on the ___ .
	A boat goes on the ___ .
My birthday is in ___ _	A plane goes in the ___ .

Guess Who? {MB Games, age 6 to adult}**I, 7 or 7+**

This popular game has a repetitive language format which provides a comfortable structure for asking questions. It can be played with one or two players on each side, taking it in turns to ask questions such as 'Is it a man?', 'Is he wearing glasses?', to identify a character by a process of elimination. You can make your own version using photographs of children in the class or pictures of famous people or cartoon characters.

Guess what?**I, 55**

Using picture or word cards, place them face-down in a central pile. Take it in turns to select one and give clues to elicit the target word from your partner. For example:

Target word= 'socks'
 Child: 'They go on your feet'. Adult: 'Shoes.'
 Child: 'You put them on *before* your shoes'. Adult: 'Socks.'
 Child gives the card to the adult or places it face-up in a discard pile.

Instructions**I**

Using a cue card, the child must tell the adult what to draw, or how to move objects on the table into the same position. Preposition cards and mapping work are useful here. For example:

- * Put the spider in the bath.
- * Put the pig behind the tractor.
- * Draw a blue circle on a red line.
- * Draw a line from C3 to GB, and from GB to J3.

The adult may seek clarification if needed (eg 'Which pig?'). Later, encourage the child to give clarification early if it looks like the adult is about to make a mistake:

SS**Questions where a one-word answer won't do****E**

'Where?', 'When?', 'What happened?', 'How?' and 'Why?' questions tend to elicit phrases rather than single words, with a greater range of possible answers. 'Why-Because' cards are useful and help to demonstrate that there can sometimes be several answers to the same question.



Alternatives**E**

Ask the child questions which require more than one answer, for example:

- * How many uses are there for a piece of string?
- * What reasons can you think of for walking instead of going on the bus?
- * What could this man be angry about?
- * Why do people give each other presents?

Reading aloud with questions**R**

After reading out a short passage, the child answers one to four questions that can be answered by a phrase or sentence found in the text.

Crosswords**R, I, 7 or 7+**

Two players have a small crossword puzzle each but the clues are separated and swapped round. Players take it in turns to ask for a clue (eg 'seven across please') which the other person reads out. Write in the answer if known. This can also be played with two teams of two people.

Note:if the clues are difficult to solve, players are instructed to say 'Pass'

E**Saying 'No thank you'****I, E**

Put all of the pieces needed to complete two Mr Potato Heads, or two Flounder puzzles (Rockets Toys), or your names in Scrabble® letters, into a bag. Take it in turns to be in charge of the bag, reach in and offer a piece to your partner. They must say 'Yes please' or 'No thank you' and then take one for yourself. Put unwanted pieces back in the bag, give it a shake and repeat. Continue to see who gets all their pieces first. Then swap roles.

Practice at contradicting**I, E**

The adult describes the child, for example, 'You've got long hair; you like swimming, you drive a Porsche'.

After each sentence the child has to agree or disagree - but one-word answers are *not* allowed!

Acceptable responses are 'No, I haven't!', 'Yes, that's true', 'I'm too young to drive', etc.

Then the child writes down five statements about the adult and the roles are reversed. (This is a safe lead-in to asking and answering questions about each other.)

Impossible commands (practice at negating)**(R), I, E**

Write various commands on cards, some of which are impossible, for example:

- * Click your fingers
- * Stand on one leg
- * Lick your neck

- * Touch your elbow with your nose
- * Stand on the wall
- * Break your leg off.

Place the cards in a pile, face-down, and take it in turns to pick up one from the pile and read it out. The other person must either follow the instruction or say 'I can't', 'It's too difficult', 'That's impossible', etc. Invite the children to make up their own instructions!

Picture version

For non-readers, play this with two piles of pictures of body parts. Take it in turns to pick up a card from each pile and connect them in an instruction, for example, 'Stick your finger in your ear'; 'Put your chin on your foot'. This is good for readers too, as they now have to generate a sentence.

Answering the telephone

I

The adult calls the child from an extension, home or mobile phone. The child can be given a secret message to retain until they are asked for it the next day. There may be long silences at first. It is advisable to get into the habit of remaining silent when the child picks up the phone. If nothing has been said after a while, the adult should hang up. Children soon get better at saying 'Hello' when they realise it has a purpose.

Later, it is useful to role-play conversations with the child, in preparation for phone calls to other people.

Make a request

I, U

An obliging adult asks the child to get something from an adult they respond to in sentences, but do not yet speak to spontaneously, using a phrase which cannot be telescoped to one word (eg a packet of *blue* envelopes, the book *in the desk*). The child does not need to speak to the first adult but must bring the request into conversation with the second adult. If the child appears to 'hover', the second adult may assist by saying, 'Can I help?' or 'Did you need something?' but avoid anything more specific like 'What did Miss J want?'

Compare likes and dislikes (expressing opinions)

E

One person goes through a list of foods, films, or activities, etc, expressing an opinion. For example, 'I love sweetcorn', 'I quite like cabbage', 'I don't mind beetroot'. After each comment, the other person immediately agrees or disagrees: 'So do I', 'I hate it', 'Me too', etc. Then swap roles and repeat.

Use pictures or written lists to begin with but, as the child gains confidence, simply choose a topic (eg school subjects, drinks, television programmes) and generate three to five comments per topic.

I

Tattoo artist!

I

A glitter tattoo kit provides a structured way for children to interact with friends or relatives who have been educated to use commentary-style talk rather than direct questions (see Chapter 8, page 122).

The child either approaches people to ask if they would like a tattoo or sets up a tattoo area for people to visit (eg a rug spread out in a corner of the garden). The child asks each person to choose a stencil, pick two colours and say where they want their tattoo - and goes on to delight everyone with the results!

Quick-fire greetings

E

This activity gives children practice at responding automatically to greetings and other social language expressions. The adult prompts by randomly saying 'Hello', 'Good morning', 'Thank you', 'Goodbye', 'Cheerio', 'Here you are', etc. The child replies as quickly as possible with any socially acceptable response (there will be local variations), such as 'Hi', 'All right?', 'You're welcome', 'Don't mention it', 'No worries', 'Bye', 'Thank you'. Aim to fit in as many prompt-response pairs as possible into a 30-second countdown.

Turn up the volume



Extend the 'Turn up the volume' activity for Stage 6 by playing games, such as 'Guess Who?', 'Guess what?', 'Pot-luck questions' and 'Crosswords', sitting either back-to-back or on opposite sides of the room.

Group turn-taking

7+

Precede sentence-level activities with single-word or reading games. Use a fixed turn-taking sequence initially, then gradually move on to less structured activities. For turn-taking sequences where children talk to the person *next* to them, rather than the adult, use Stage 7 activities such as 'Colour sequences', 'Yes or No' questions, 'Pot-luck questions', 'Guess what?', the 'Yes! No! Game' and 'Instructions', plus the following.

Rote sequences

7+

Counting drills

Take it in turns to count in multiples of one, two, five or ten, saying two or three numbers of the sequence at each turn. Continue the sequence to an agreed number and then repeat in the opposite direction. Repeat with months of the year or letters of the alphabet.

All change!

I

Working with rote sequences, such as numbers, months of the year or letters of the alphabet, say two or three items at each turn. Each speaker holds up their right or left hand to indicate who goes next.

Talking grid (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) I, 7+

Draw a grid on a large piece of paper. Add one row per child, a column for their names and three to four columns for personal information. For example:

Name	Who I live with	My pets	My favourite television programme	My favourite food

The children write their names in the left-hand column of the grid and, taking one topic at a time, go round the group asking for information from each child. As each child responds, the adult writes or draws their answers on the grid. The completed grid may then be used in several ways, for example:

- * Guessing game - 'This person likes pizza and has a goldfish. Who is it?'
- * Memory game - 'Who can remember Mark's favourite programme?' (Cover all squares on the grid with individual pieces of paper initially and remove them one at a time to see if the children are correct.)
- * Questions - 'Zoe, what's your favourite food?' (Children take it in turns to ask each other questions. The child answering places a counter on the corresponding square. Continue until all of the squares have a counter.)

I went to market

E, 7+

This classic memory game has many variations. In the original version, someone starts off saying, 'I went to market and bought a pig.' The next person says, 'I went to market and bought a pig and some toothpaste', and so on, until the sequence is too long to remember. We have also heard 'I went on holiday and packed a swimsuit ...', and 'I went to a party and ate six pizzas ...'. Perhaps the most enterprising version (spotted in a language unit in a secondary school) is the 'Gossip' game. Younger children may need picture prompts to stimulate their imagination, but others will enjoy the freedom to say (within reason!) what they like. For example:

- * 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car.'
- * 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car after robbing a bank ...'
- * 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car after robbing a bank and went to prison ...'

Consequences

R, E, 7+

Although much of this activity is spent in silence while the children write, the resulting laughter is worth it. Participants take a blank piece of paper, write the first of the following items at the top, fold the paper over to cover their words, and pass it on to the next person. Then everyone writes the next item, folds the paper over and repeats. By the end of the game, there will be as many stories as there are participants. Finally, each participant reads out a complete story.

- | | |
|---|--|
| [Name of a man] met ... | <i>(fold the paper over and pass it on)</i> |
| [Name of a woman]. | <i>(fold the paper over and pass it on)</i> |
| [enter a place]. He said ... | <i>(and so on ...)</i> |
| [enter a question or comment]. She said ... | |
| [enter reply]. Then ... | |
| [enter what happened next]. And the consequence was ... | |
| [draw the story to a conclusion]. | <i>(make the final fold, and pass the paper on).</i> |

Pot the Lobster (Crossbow Education Ltd, age 7 to adult)**R, I, 7+**

See Stage 5 'Reading aloud' for details of this card game. When playing at Stage 7, the players call out 'Pot the lobster!' when they have a complete sentence.

Happy Families (3-6 players)**@, I, 55, 7+**

The object of the game is to collect as many families as possible (groups of four cards that belong together) by requesting individual cards. Deal out all of the cards so that every player gets an equal number of cards.* The dealer starts by asking another player for a card needed to complete a family. If the player has the card, it must be handed over. The dealer continues asking for cards until a player does not have that card.

The dealer then picks up a spare card and it is now that player's turn to request cards. They can retake the cards taken in the previous round if they still have part of that family. When a player gathers a family, they must put the four cards face-up on the table in front of them. The player who collects the most sets is the winner. This is good for using each other's names to get their attention, and for eye contact to ensure that the right person is listening before a card is requested.

*Any spare cards are placed face-down in a central pile. When a player's turn ends, they take one of the cards and this continues until all of the cards have been taken.

Fish (3-6 players)**@, I, 55, 7+**

This game is similar to the previous activity (Happy Families), the object being to collect as many groups of four cards that belong together as possible. Fish is usually played with a standard pack of playing cards but you can make your own, the object being to collect four of the same cards (matching colours, animals, vehicles, etc). Play as for Happy Families but with the following changes.

Deal five cards to each player and put the rest face down in a central pile.

Ask individuals for all/the cards they have in a particular group, eg 'Can I have all your threes?', 'Have you got any cats?'

If the person asked does not have any of the named cards, they say 'Go fish!' The asker must then take the top card of the undealt stock. If that card is the one asked for, the asker shows it and gets another turn. If the taken card is not the one asked for, the asker keeps it, but the turn now passes to the player who said 'Go fish!'.

Give Us a Clue (Charades)**@,I,E,U,7+**

This is a miming game in which players take it in turns to mime the title of a book, song or film while the other players call out to guess it. There are various devices for indicating the number of words or syllables in a word, rhyming words, and so on. You can also play it like Pictionary™ (stage 6) and draw the clues.

Reading will be required to know what title to mime or draw, unless it is whispered by an adult.

Stage 8 Using connected sentences in conversation

All of the group games can initially be practised one-to-one.

Storytelling

I, E, 55

Use a prompt such as Rory's Story Cubes®(available from www.storycubes.com). Roll the dice and make up a story connecting all nine images. Choose from themes such as 'Batman' or 'Doctor Who', or the original set for general storytelling.

Floor plan

I, E, 55

Show children the convention for marking doors on a floor plan. One person describes the ground floor of their house as if they are entering through their front door and walking from room to room (they might like to draw a floor plan first). The other person listens and creates a matching (they hope!) floor plan, interjecting to seek clarification or ask for repetition as necessary. Swap roles. This can be repeated for upstairs or the garden.

Twenty Questions

I, E, 55

Each player can ask up to 20 questions to identify a hidden word or picture - the other person can only answer 'Yes' or 'No'. The choice can be as wide as you like by making the introductory question, 'Animal, vegetable or mineral?', or narrow the choice down to a category such as 'Famous people', 'Television and films', 'Natural world', etc.

Teach me

I, 55

Version 1

The adult and the child play a game in which the adult has 'forgotten' how to do a simple task such as brush their teeth or make a sandwich. The child must give them step-by-step instructions to make them carry out the activity correctly. For best effect, the adult should deliberately make mistakes by following instructions literally.

Version 2

The child teaches the adult something new, eg how to play a game, set up an online account or use an app.

Talking Grid {from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications}

I, 8+

Extend the Stage 7 activity by asking each child to relay their information to the group. For example, 'My name is Mark. I live with my Mum and Dad and baby sister Kirsty. I haven't got any pets. My favourite TV programme is *Dr Who* and I love spicy bean burgers.' The other children are invited to ask questions, for example 'How old is Kirsty?'

Walking Robot (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) I, 55

The child hides an object and you become a robot who needs precise instructions to find it. Put on a blindfold or simply shut your eyes, sit down ... and wait! You can prompt if necessary with 'I can't move until you tell me to'.

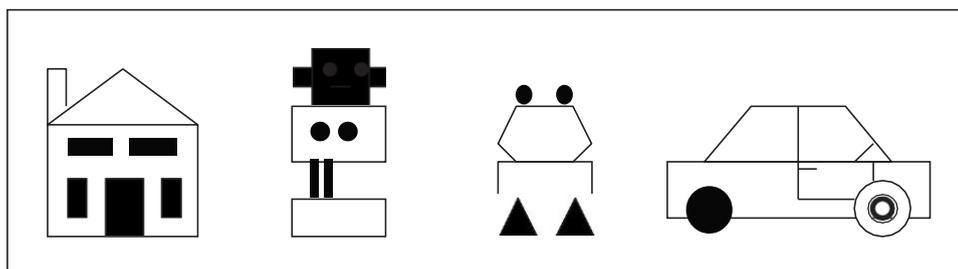
When told to move or walk, step your legs up and down until told to stand up. When eventually walking, continue to walk until you are told to stop ... even if this means bumping into furniture or the wall!

If the child doesn't know their left from right, they can tell you to turn slowly until you are facing the right way and then command you (the robot) to stop. When they say, 'It's in front of you', reach out and grab at the air until you are given precise directions to move forward, reach lower down, etc. You may need to take crafty peeks to avoid accidents!

Drawing Robot (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications)

I, 55

Draw a large but very simple line drawing *in pencil* on a sheet of A4-sized paper. This can be a house, robot, frog or car, for example:



Place a marker pen next to the drawing and tell the child you are a robot who needs instructions to draw the picture. They must tell you exactly what to do and you will do exactly what they say. Put on a blindfold or simply shut your eyes ... and wait! Prompt the child if necessary with 'I can't move until you tell me to pick up the pen'. When told to pick it up, make open and shut movements with your hand until told to move your hand forwards to where the pen is placed.

When you eventually pick up the pen, continue to lift it up in the air, high above your head until the child tells you to stop ... and to bring it back down again. Don't take the top off the pen until instructed, and so on, until the picture is completed. You will get some surprisingly good results and have a lot of fun!

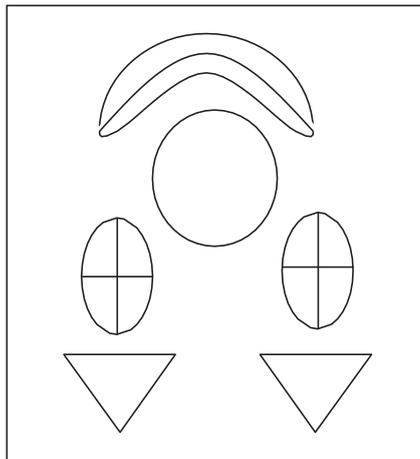
Seeking clarification (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications)

I, 55

Read out a series of instructions that are deliberately complicated or ambiguous and warn the child that they will need to ask you questions to be sure about what to do. The following example is reproduced with permission from OEd Publications.

Take a piece of paper and place it in the portrait position on the table, in front of you.

- 2 Draw an inverted triangle at the bottom of the page.(The child will need to ask for a pen or pencil.)
- 3 Draw another inverted triangle next to it. Make it the same size.
- 4 Draw an upright oval above the left triangle.
- 5 Draw an identical item above the triangle on the right.
- 6 Draw a line horizontally across each oval.
- 7 Draw a line vertically through the middle of each oval.
- 8 Draw a larger circle in the middle of the page, above the ovals.
- 9 Draw an inverted banana-shape above the big circle.
- 10 Draw a line down the length of the banana.
- 11 Ask the child 'Can you guess what you have drawn?' If they have no idea, suggest they turn the page upside-down!



Note: see *Active Listening for Active Learning* (2009) for more individual and group games to develop questioning, directing and seeking clarification.

Stare out contest!

This is a non-verbal activity but we do not introduce it until Stage 8. We prefer to allow individuals to develop eye contact naturally while they relax during turn-taking and talking activities, and only introduce this activity when there are difficulties establishing eye-contact.

Set a challenge to maintain eye contact for 30 seconds without looking away- blinking and laughing are allowed! The first 10 seconds often feel intensely uncomfortable for both parties but, suddenly, something lifts and it becomes surprisingly easy. Once the individual can make eye contact. apply the rules in Chapter 10 (page 214) to activities in Stages 6, 7 and 8, as appropriate.

Hedbanz (What Am I?) (Poul Lomond Gomes, age 7 to adult) I, 55, 8+

Each player wears a headband which holds a picture that only the other player(s) can see. Taking it in turns, the players then have a minute each to ask as many questions as they can to identify their picture. Make your own version using stretch cotton headbands and pictures for 'Who Am I?' and 'Where Am I?' in addition to 'What Am I?'.

Don't Say It (Poul Lomond Gomes, age 6 to adult) R, I, U, 8+

Can you get your partner or team to say 'pig'? It's not as easy as it sounds, when you can't say the words on the card - in this case, 'sausage', 'sty' or 'pork'. Players need to be quick to avoid running out of time. The game contains 200 words at four different levels of difficulty, depending on the age and abilities of the players.

This game re-creates many elements of conversation - creativity, spontaneity, interjection, clarification - while retaining the comfort of a familiar structure.

Who's Who (Ginger Fox, age teen to adult) R, I, E, U, 8+

This game is similar to 'Don't Say It'. The players describe famous names for their partner or team in a series of one-minute rounds, without giving any rhyming clues or saying the name on the card.

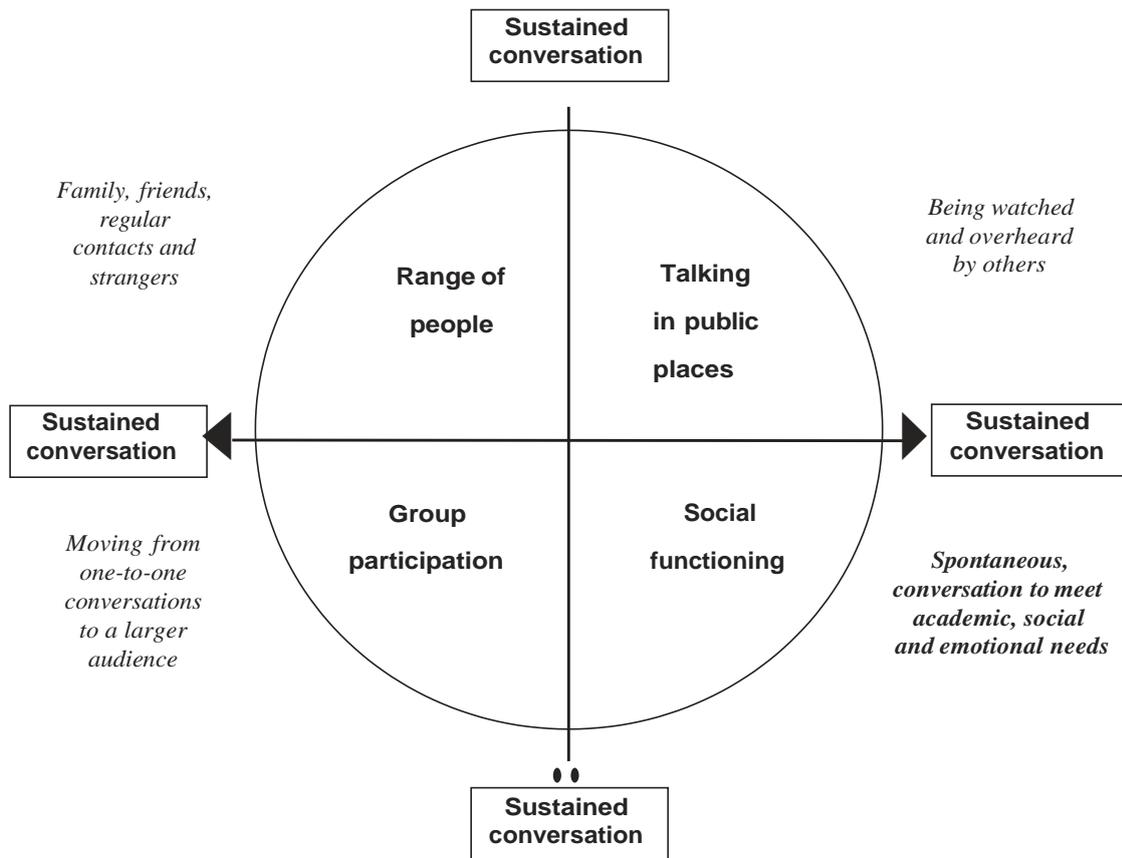
Sussed!® All sorts (Gomes to Get Ltd, age 8 to adult) R, I, E, U, 8+

The players 'suss out' each other's likes and dislikes. Each player draws a card containing questions with three possible answers, which they read out. They choose the answer they consider to be true and write it down. The rest of the players win points if they write down the same answer. Players may challenge the reader's answer and the reader may change their mind as a result. This leads to amended points so it is in players' interests to dispute answers and argue their case!

Sussed!® Emotional Intelligence (Gomes to Get Ltd, age 10 to adult) R, I, E, U, 8+

This is played in the same way as the previous game but focuses on the players' personality traits, emotions and reactions to different situations.

Handout 01 A multidimensional model of confident talking (Johnson & Wintgens, 2016)

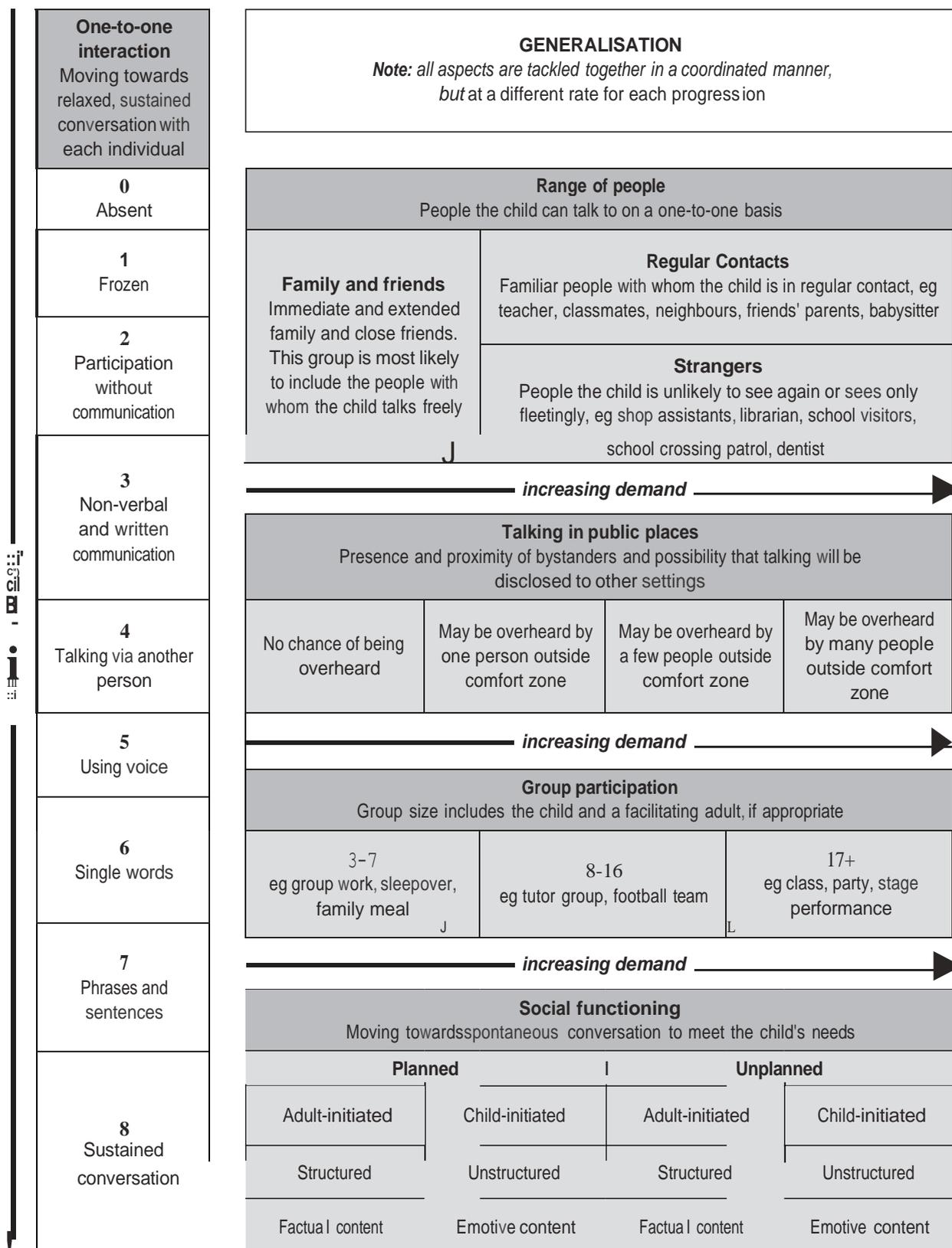


Do you know a child who talks confidently to some people but not others?

- 2 Using the four quadrants of the circle, think about the people and situations in your setting where the child does not talk.

(Source: *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual*, second edition, 2016, Speechmark Publishing)

Handout 02 The progressions of confident talking (Johnson & Wintgens, 2016)



(Source: *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual*, second edition, 2016, Speechmark Publishing)

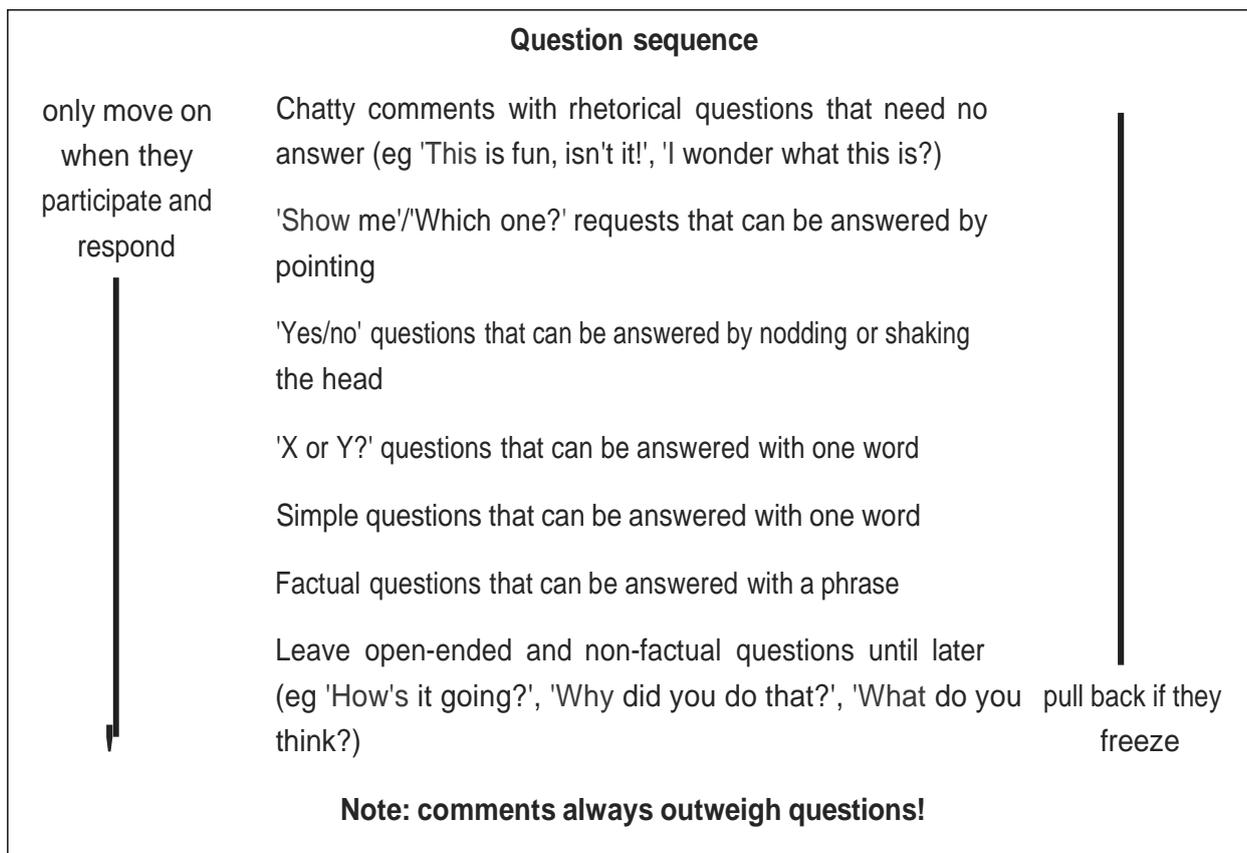
Handout 03 **Confident talking - the stages of one-to-one interaction**

Stage	Child's presentation	Example of behaviour
0	Absent	Child or young person stays in the bedroom, hides behind a chair or observes activity from a distance.
	Frozen	Child sits passively or accepts help without moving (eg does not take a ball that is offered; stands motionless while coat is buttoned up).
2	Participates without communication	Child participates silently in activities such as board games or jigsaw puzzles; takes items that are offered (eg a biscuit or crayons); and complies with requests which do not require an answer (eg deals out cards or draws a picture)
3	Uses non-verbal and written communication	Child responds to questions and may even initiate contact through: pointing; nodding or shaking head; tapping; gesture; drawing or writing. Child is relaxed and responds to the adult with a variety of facial expressions.
Talking bridge	Tolerates voice being heard by a bystander	Child talks to or laughs with parent without hiding their mouth in a visitor's or the therapist's presence; talks to other children in the same room as their teacher; talks to family member using a telephone in a public area. Voice may be quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
4	Talks through another person	Child answers when the parent repeats the therapist's question; asks the parent if a person present can play a game with them; talks in a structured activity with an adult but looks at their friend or parent when they speak. Voice may be quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
5	Uses voice	Child vocalises an audible rather than a whispered sound to express emotion, accompany shared play, participate in an activity or directly communicate (eg laughter, humming, sound of police siren, animal noises, letter sounds, 'mmm' for 'yes') Child reads familiar material aloud on request (reading is a vocal exercise for proficient readers, rather than communication).
6	Communicates with single words	Child says a single word in response to questions or choices or in structured activities such as games. Voice may be very quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
7	Communicates with sentences	Child uses sentences in response to questions or in structured activities such as games or play readings. Child may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occasionally offer a spontaneous comment only ask questions during structured activities. Voice may be very quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
8	Conversation	Child has an adult-led, two-way conversation, provided no one else is perceived to be listening. Child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteers spontaneous comments but questions may be limited may not initiate contact or seek help outside planned sessions.
Note	<p>Whispering is not included in this progression because it is an avoidance of using voice. For the purposes of keeping records, whispering can be regarded as stage 3+.</p> <p>When the child is completely comfortable, 8+ may be observed, for example: unplanned conversation on most topics; child-initiated questions and requests; social language and conversation-fillers (words and phrases that add no meaning but feature in relaxed, uninhibited conversation).</p>	

(Source: *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual*, second edition, 2016, Speechmark Publishing)

Handout 04 Informal ways to support the development of confident talking

Gradually introduce questions on a one-to-one basis at the child or young person's pace.



2 Talk through a parent or friend

- Use parents or friends as 'go-betweens' to prepare the child for talking to you directly.
- Provide space for them to talk together, eg 'Why don't you two go into the book corner to discuss your plan?' (*Keep your distance and/or pretend to be occupied.*)
- Ask questions through the friend or parent, eg 'Could you ask Pria where she put her lunchbox?', 'I expect you've got a favourite character- Mum, do you know Joe's favourite one?' (*Prime parents to redirect questions rather than answer for the child.*)
- Ask the child to communicate through their friend or parent, eg 'Tell Ben whose table you want to be on and we'll get it sorted.' (*Move away or turn away initially, so that the conversation is private and gradually get closer until the child talks to their parent or friend in your presence.*)

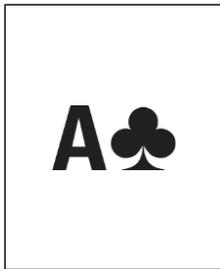
3 Parents can help their child to answer unexpected questions

- Give the child five seconds to respond, then repeat or rephrase the question if necessary.
- If there is no response after another five seconds, casually move on or change the subject, eg 'We'll let you know later', 'Have you got this style in size three?' Don't answer for the child!

(Source *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual*, second edition, 2016, Speechmark Publishing)

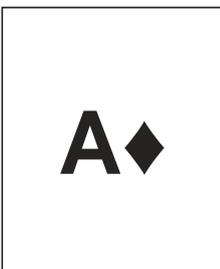
Advice sheet for staff and parents of children who have selective mutism

TALKING TO THE CHILD ABOUT SPEECH ANXIETY - 'THE PEP TALK'



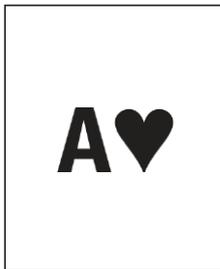
Acknowledge the child's fear of speaking.

Let them know that you understand their difficulty and the feelings they experience when they try to speak. You know they want to and have tried to speak, but they feel so worried about talking that they tighten up and feel frozen - the words seem to get stuck in their throat. The language you use and the detail you give will depend on their age, but even very young children benefit from having their problem acknowledged rather than ignored, 'hushed-up' or misinterpreted.



Let the child know they are not alone.

Younger children need to know that there are plenty of other lovely children who find talking hard at first. For older children (just as for adults) it can be especially reassuring to be told that their condition has a name (selective mutism) and that other children their age have got through it. A calm, informed approach will inspire confidence!



Take the pressure off talking so that the child can relax, participate, enjoy and learn in all settings. Emphasise that there are lots of other ways to join in and have fun. Impress on the child that the most important thing is for them to be happy and relaxed. Tell the child that there is no rush and they can speak when they feel ready. Let them know that they have a friend in you to turn to, if they are feeling upset.



Explain that talking will get easier.

It is essential that the child sees themselves as a person who will talk at some time in the future and knows that you have confidence in them. Tell them you know they are not ready to talk yet but it will not always be like this; it will get easier and they will get braver. Emphasise that they only have to do things they can manage; and that by starting with things they find easy, they will gradually be able to do more and more until, one day, talking is really easy too. Even children as young as three years old can see the logic of this approach.

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An advice sheet for staff and parents of children who have selective mutism

FIRM FOUNDATIONS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE, COURAGE & SELF-ESTEEM

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Focus on what children *can* do rather than can't. Foster their individual skills, talents and interests so that they have plenty to feel good about. Ask children to show you and others how to play an instrument, care for their pets, use technology, contribute to a magazine - anything that shows you value them as a whole person and that there's more to life than talking.

*

Physical exercise is good for mind, body and soul and helps to keep anxiety at bay. Start each day with a plan that includes physical activity - whether this is letting off steam after school for younger children, or sweeping up leaves, Tai Chi or walking the dog for older children. Build family outings and school trips around physical challenges which can do so much to boost children's confidence while proving that it is possible to conquer fears through sheer determination.

*

It's *achievement* that builds confidence rather than praise; confidence then enables us to *accept* praise. Under-confident children are therefore often uncomfortable with praise, but need frequent acknowledgement that they are doing well to build self-esteem, persistence and motivation. So ensure success by setting realistic targets and structuring or adapting tasks to the child's capabilities; then smile and *describe* what the child has achieved.



*

Children with SM become acutely aware that they are different to other children and do not want this emphasised, so unless children are very young, acknowledge their achievements around talking and being brave in *private*, rather than in public. In contrast, make sure they receive plenty of praise in public for behaviour that is encouraged and valued in *all* children.

*

Recognise courage or bravery when children do something they initially resist, and reward appropriately with a hug, sticker, special treat, congratulations or verbal acknowledgement. There is a danger of ignoring or dismissing bravery if it seems that the child was being ridiculous to worry in the first place, especially if the situation leaves adults feeling irritated or guilty rather than sympathetic. However, it is important to replace the child's panic, resentment, exhaustion or residual anxiety with pleasant feelings as soon as possible. This is how children learn the name for courage and become less resistant next time; they have a right to feel proud of themselves when they are brave.

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- * Resist the urge to do things for children when they look anxious or hesitant, e.g. stepping in to take something that has been offered to your child. If it's only anxiety that's stopping them, this anxiety will not subside if you allow them to rely on you. Give a clear message that they are capable in the form of *permission*, e.g. "It's OK to take the present from Robert", rather than a direct command, e.g. "Go on, take the present". Then smile and *wait* (at least 5 seconds). If this does not work, *make the task easier*, "Tell you what, hold your hands out and see if you can catch it!", "I'll help you hold your hands out and then Robert can give it to you". Do not step in unless you do it *with* the child, "Let's take the present from Robert together, are you ready, 1-2-3...!". Be ready to say "You did well!" as soon as they take up the challenge.
- * Check your behaviour to see if stepping in has become a habit. If you don't know how to make a task more manageable, give yourself some thinking time by gently moving on rather than doing the task yourself. "Come back to Jess later and she can try again"; "That's OK, leave it for now". The less you do, the more children will see you believe in them, and the braver they'll become.
- * Stick to your word so children know they can trust you to move at their pace - and be ready to be lead by them as they gain confidence and want to do more!

We'll just give Charlie his present and stay for 15 minutes while it's quiet

I'm just popping to the school office, I'll be back in 10 minutes and then we can go home

- * It's important for children to view difficult tasks as challenges to work towards, rather than insurmountable obstacles. Convert 'can't' to 'can't yet' and assure children they will succeed with more practice/ as they get braver/ when it's broken down into tiny steps.
- * Children will only take risks and push the boundaries if they are not afraid to make mistakes. Acknowledge and reward effort rather than perfection and view mistakes as proof of endeavour and learning, rather than opportunities for adults to correct or children to give up.
- * Show children how to laugh, relax and have fun. It is important for everyone to enjoy mealtimes, gardening, craftwork and play without worrying excessively about germs or mess, so put away the wet-wipes until the end of the activity! Fears of getting dirty or putting something in the wrong place make it hard to settle in unfamiliar environments, mix with other children and take the initiative.
- * If children are worrying about their parents, they cannot focus on their own well-being. If a child has good reason to be concerned about a parent's behaviour or lifestyle, it is time to reflect on changes the adult would like to make, before investigating local resources or talking to a friend or GP about accessing parental support.
- * Most children who have SM are unable to initiate contact with other children so actively cultivate friendships by pairing them up with other children for play activities and project work.

- * Ensure inclusion in all activities and welcome participation at any level while the child works towards talking, e.g. gesture, writing, drawing, making choices, scoring, recording information, checking and handling equipment.
- * Often it is anxiety about only one component that creates avoidance, e.g. opting out of a school trip because you don't know if there'll be a toilet-stop en route; being afraid to use school toilets because of the sound of the hand-dryer; not going abroad because you don't know how to get a passport. Show children how to be a positive problem-solver by visualising big intangible worries as smaller components on post-it notes, a mind-map or list. It's then much easier to see which part is causing most anxiety and how it can be addressed.
- * Show by your own example how you don't let anxiety stop you doing things that at first seem frightening or overwhelming. Tell children about times you felt worried and considered backing out, but faced your fear and gave it a go or found a solution.

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HELPING CHILDREN TO COPE WITH ANXIETY

How to make anxious children *more* anxious ...

- 1 Tell them there's nothing to worry about.
- 2 Sort out their problems.
- 3 Don't allow them to become distressed.
- 4 Rush to comfort them.
- 5 Let them decide what they can cope with.
- 6 Ask if they are going to be OK.
- 7 Answer all of their questions.
- 8 Spring the dreaded event on them at the last minute so there's less time to worry.

Did that list surprise you? No one wants to see their child in distress. So, of course, you want to take away your child's anxiety.

However, anxiety is *normal* and it is *good* for us - it keeps us safe!

Anxiety makes sure that we look out for danger and are prepared to meet life's challenges. When children are shown that the only way to cope with anxiety is to eliminate it, they become increasingly intolerant of anxiety. They only have to feel the tiniest bit anxious and it's unbearable - they feel compelled to run (FLIGHT) or resist (FIGHT) and may seize up or go into denial (FREEZE).

There is another way. Parents can help children FACE their anxiety, understand it, work with it and overcome it!

Things to do differently to make anxious children *less* anxious

- 1 Anxious children can't help worrying. Telling them there's nothing to worry about makes the worry more confusing, elusive and overwhelming. Children need help to understand that it is *worry* (a product of their excellent imagination!) that is making their body produce the sensations of panic, rather than the situation they fear: "You feel worried because you've never done this on your own before", "You're not sure what will happen when I go downstairs", "It feels scary right now but, after a while, you'll see that nothing bad happens, and your worry will go away and stop bothering you". By labelling and recognising 'Worry', children learn that it's a normal response that they can talk to and control; it's not a stop sign that has to be obeyed. So, rather than dismissing



worries, let children know how amazing they are every time Worry appears and they are brave enough to ride it out. They'll be surprised how quickly it gives up and goes away!

- 2 When children are tiny, of course they need their carers to fix any problems so that they are safe, well and happy. But even two year olds are actively problem solving throughout the day as they discover how to stop food falling off their spoon and retrieve objects that are out of reach. Independence develops through experimenting, finding your own solutions and enjoying the knowledge that you can be self-reliant. It thrives on a flexible approach to life where there are many ways to do the same thing; there is no need to be perfect; and you can take pride in *effort* as well as achievement. When parents do all of the fixing for anxious children by providing comfort, removing sources of stress or doing things for them to prevent failure, the children become more dependent, less willing to take risks and increasingly passive in their parent's presence. Just recognising that you have fallen into any of these patterns of behaviour, and knowing that it was in response to your child's anxiety, not the cause of it, is the most important step towards turning things around.
- 3 If we allow children to avoid everything they're afraid of, they will never learn the difference between a *real* threat and an imagined threat. Acknowledge how brave children are being and help them face that fear, one tiny step at a time. Maybe they only need to attend the party for the first ten minutes or watch you having your dental examination, but *not* going to the party or to the dentist's should never be an option.
- 4 We comfort young children when they are in pain and convey the message 'Stinging nettles, broken glass and fights are bad things that you need to avoid if you want to save yourself further pain; meanwhile, I will make you feel better'. If we cuddle and soothe children when they are afraid of insects, dogs or fireworks, for example, the message is the same: 'These are BAD things to be avoided and you should run to me for comfort'. So, ACKNOWLEDGE their anxiety; REASSURE; FACE the fear and PRAISE them. "Of course you're worried, you weren't expecting that but it can't hurt you. Let's stand further back until you get used to it". Save the cuddles for when you congratulate them for being so brave!
- 5 Anxious children will be convinced they cannot face certain events. By agreeing to their terms - no parties, no visits, no falling asleep alone in their own bed - we deprive them of the opportunity to discover that anxiety can be managed and things are not as difficult as they expect. Consequently, all new challenges will be scary and they will make increasing demands to avoid any anxiety-provoking situation. It is frightening for children to have this much control; they need *adults* to make the big decisions about what is a real threat and what is safe. Adults should, in turn, be guided by the child regarding how *much* they can face at a time, steering them towards gradual mastery of feared situations. By making activities simpler or shorter, providing a distraction or phasing out support, realistic expectations can be set and children can be assured that all they need is the courage to have a go. It may also take courage for their parent to step back and let it happen.
- 6 "Will you be OK now?" Asking children this question before leaving them tells the child they are right to worry - after all, even you, the adult, are not sure that they'll be OK! *Tell* children they will be OK, let them know when you will be back, and do your very best



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not to be late. When you return, stay a while to share an activity and, on your way home, talk about the fun you had, rather than the terrible time they had without you.

- 7 Anxious children try to eliminate uncertainty by asking their parents endless questions about upcoming events. Answering each one conveys the message that the only way to deal with anxiety is to have a completely accurate forecast for the future - an impossible task. Having *no* idea of what's coming up is horribly unsettling at best and utterly terrifying at worst. So children certainly need a broad outline of their daily schedule and important events in their calendar. They need explanations or role play of routine procedures to know what to expect. But beyond that, as long as children have a clear understanding of what is required from them to complete specific assignments, they need to discover that the finer detail can wait and, more importantly, that they can cope with *not knowing*. Differentiate between need-to-know questions that require an answer and 'worry' questions. Try to answer 'worry' questions with another question, so children can explore the reasons for their anxiety and test how they would cope in each situation.



For example:

"I'm not sure how many people will be there. Why would you like to know? How many do you think you could cope with? So what could you do if there are more than that? What would make it easier?"

"She might have a dog. What worries you most about dogs? How can we tell if it's safe to go near a dog? What do you think dogs want when they jump up? What would make you feel better if a dog was around? So what should we ask Auntie Sue to do?"

Above all, show children by your own example that it's natural to worry about new situations but you can be brave and give it a go anyway. You can show *Worry who's* in charge!

- 8 After seeing anxiety, repetitive questioning and resistance grow on the approach to dreaded events, it is completely understandable to forgo advance warning to save children getting themselves into a state. On the surface, this seems to be a good strategy because children often appear to cope reasonably well when there is no way out of a situation. However, this 'success' is usually a feat of endurance, spurred on by sheer adrenalin, rather than an enjoyable experience. The child is left, not with a sense of achievement, but with feelings of resentment, dread and insecurity. They become increasingly wary and suspicious, knowing that the next surprise could be just around the corner. Working through anticipatory anxiety to prepare for a specific event takes a lot more energy and resolve, but provides the foundation for general anxiety-coping strategies. Children learn that anxiety is normal; it can be spoken to with calming and rational thoughts, and overcome with familiarisation, a back-up plan and courage!



Further reading

- * *The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside (2011), Hodder Children's Books (age 3-9).
- * *What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety* by Dawn Heubner (2005), Magination Press (age 6-12).
- * *Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents* by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons (2013), Health Communications, Inc. (age 8-18).
- * *First Steps Out Of Anxiety* by Dr Kate Middleton (2010), Lion Books, Oxford (young people and adults).

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An advice sheet for parents, carers and teachers of children who worry

MISTAEKS HAPPEN I

Being afraid to make mistakes can hold us back in all walks of life. It's particularly hard on anxious children and young people who are desperate to get it right first time. The following tips may help them learn that mistakes are an inevitable and important part of life - they can even be fun!

* Create a culture where mistakes are expected rather than penalised

Talk positively about mistakes when they occur. They show that children are having a go, trying hard and giving themselves and others the opportunity to learn. The only way you find out what works is to rule out the things that *don't* work, and the only way you get better at anything is to practise. Mistakes are the most important thing that happen in any classroom, leisure or sporting activity, because they tell you where to focus that practice.



- * When children are reluctant to write because they fear their work will be returned with any mistakes marked in red pen.
 - Add comments on sticky notes which can be studied, moved around and removed later.
 - Try the 'two stars and a wish' approach for group, self and individual evaluation. Say two things you like about the piece of work and one thing that could be improved to make it even better.
- * Introduce correction policies (simple written rules) for perfectionist children who can't bear to make mistakes. So it's not 'if you make a mistake ... 'but' *When* you make a mistake, you need to ... '. This gives children something definite to *do*, rather than simply telling them *notto* throw their work in the bin or give up.
- * Do an internet search for someone your child admires for their accomplishments; for example, a footballer, a musician, an author or a game designer. The chances are that you will find something about how it took them a long time to get it right! Or look for inspiring quotes like this one, which is attributed to Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb and much more: 'I have not failed. I've just found ten thousand ways that won't work.'

* Be a role model

Be good-humoured about your own mistakes - the kind that cause no harm - and show that they are nothing to feel bad about. You simply put things right, keep trying or leave things until later to sort out.

- * Always state what you have learned from your mistakes, eg 'At least I know to put the lid on firmly next time!'; 'I'm definitely getting better at this'.
- * Resist the temptation to swoop in and fix children's handiwork to make it perfect - celebrate their efforts, creativity and personal achievements. Once you change a child's masterpiece, it's yours not theirs and they may be less willing to share with you next time.
- * Demonstrate that it's fine to say 'I don't know' or 'I'm not sure' - it's OK not to know the answer, and cool to try to find it.
- * Get children you know well laughing with this game. Take it in turns to pick an activity out of a hat (eg 'Clean your teeth', 'Go upstairs') and do it in the most daft, silly way possible -you can mime, but doing it for real is funnier!

**MISTAKES
ARE
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* A different attitude to guessing

- * Encourage children to guess by stressing that all of their guesses are acceptable. Guesses demonstrate *good thinking*; it's not about 'right' and 'wrong' answers.
- * Practise guessing in the safe structure of guessing games such as Guess Who? (which can be adapted using the children's names), Twenty Questions, Hangman, I-Spy and What Am I? Children are usually more inclined to guess if they are given so many 'lives' to use up.
- * Teach the process of good guessing for when you don't know the answer - this is vital for multiple-choice questions. First, eliminate the answers that are *definitely wrong*. If one of the remaining answers seems more likely than the others, or you just get a *feeling* about it, choose that one. But think about it for only ten seconds. If nothing is obvious, decide a rule beforehand and make that choice as quickly as possible; for example, always go for 'the third option' or 'the longest answer'. Done!



* Further reading

- * *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg (2010), Workman Publishing Company (ages 3-adult).
- * *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes* by Mark Pett (2011), Sourcebooks Jabberwocky (ages 4-8).
- * *Mistakes That Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions and How They Came to Be* by Charlotte Foltz ones (2013), Doubleday Books for Young Readers (ages 8-12).
- * *Helping Your Child Overcome Perfectionism*, Anxiety BC resources, online, www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/OvercomingPerfectionism.pdf.
- * *Active Listening for Active Learning (Good Thinking)* by Maggie Johnson and Carolyn Player (2009), QEd Publications.

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An advice sheet for parents, carers and teachers

ENSURING AN ANXIETY-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE SELECTIVE MUTISM

PLEASE DO:

- * Recognise that selective mutism is an anxiety disorder; a phobia of talking which can only be overcome by allowing children to take small steps forward, in a controlled way, at their own pace. By removing speech anxiety in everyday situations, you will enable them to benefit fully from an intervention programme.
- * Remember that this is a genuine difficulty and any pressure to speak will make things worse. Have patience and let the child speak when they are ready.
- * Engage the child through physical activity, craftwork, creative projects and fun.
- * Talk to the child about what you are doing without expecting an answer. Make comments rather than asking direct questions, eg 'This looks like your dog, I can't remember his name though', rather than 'What's the name of your dog?'
- * Provide the *opportunity* to speak rather than making demands, eg 'Hmm, I wonder where this one goes?' (pause); 'Oh dear, I can't find any round ones' (pause).
- * Warmly respond to the child's attempts to communicate through gesture or whispering, by talking back in a natural way as if they had spoken.
- * Ask the child questions through other adults or children they talk to, keeping a comfortable distance until the child can talk easily in front of you.
- * Reassure the child in private that you won't single them out in class to answer a question, read aloud or demonstrate an activity unless they let you know that *they want to be chosen*. Say that they can start talking as soon as they feel ready but, until then, just have a good time! It's OK to laugh and it's OK to sing - whatever they feel they can manage.
- * Invite the child to let you know if anything is upsetting them, or if they have news they want to share, through a two-way liaison book with home.
- * Assist transitions between home and other settings: eg parents participate with the child in other settings; staff or friends visit the child's home.
- * Try to find time at school for periods of unpressured one-to-one interaction.
- * Encourage the child to sit, work or play with friends they talk to in other settings.
- * Organise activities in which children move, sing or talk *in unison*, and activities and games which do not require speech, making this clear before you start.

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The Selective Mutism

PLEASE DO:

- * Include the child in other activities by offering alternative forms of communication as a temporary stepping-stone while the child is having difficulty speaking; for example, pointing, holding up a picture, writing, or recording their news at home.
- * Provide opportunities to talk in situations that are less threatening to the child. For example: 'Can you take [new child] to the pegs and show her where to put her bag?'; 'Take Mummy to the hall and show her what we've been making for assembly'; 'Please help [less able child] tidy up. He's not sure what he's got to do.'
- * Actively support friendships with other children, making sure that peers don't pressurise the child to speak and understand that they will speak in their own time.
- * Use puppets, masks, voice-activated toys, recorded messages, talking tubes and walkie-talkies, which may be easier for the child than direct talking.
- * Ensure that the child can access the toilet, meals, drinks, help and first aid without speaking. Agree a procedure to follow when they feel ill or upset.
- * Let children sit at the back or side of the classroom so that they have a good vantage point.
- * At registration, allow hands-up, involve the whole class in a social activity, or ask 'Is [each child's name] here?', so that the class members look around and answer in unison.
- * Let the child know how well they are doing by noticing them being helpful, kind, thoughtful, hard-working, good-humoured, brave and creative.
- * Encourage independence and ensure success. Rather than doing things *for* the child, do things *with* them initially and then withdraw, or make things *easier*.
- * Have the same expectations for good behaviour as for any other child.

PLEASE DO NOT:

- * Be hurt or offended when the child remains silent.
- * Confuse a fixed facial expression with glaring, defiance, being uninterested or smirking.
- * Beg, bribe, persuade or challenge the child to speak, or make it your mission to get them to talk.
- * Make the child say 'Hello', 'Please', 'Thank you, etc. They are *not* being rude.
- * Ask direct questions which put the child on the spot, especially when other people are watching and waiting for an answer.
- * Look directly at the child when you are hoping that they might say something.
- * Penalise the child for not talking or tell them that they are talking too quietly.
- * React when the child finally talks. Simply carry on as if they have always spoken, responding positively to what they say, rather than the fact that they spoke. Later you can remark on how much fun you had, how good they are at reading, etc.

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PLEASE DO NOT:

- * Make the child repeat themselves in public if you don't hear (it's great that they are talking at all!). Do say in private, 'Sorry, I don't understand', or 'That was a great try but I'm sorry, I didn't hear', or 'Did you say X or Y?'.
- * Tell the child off in public - have a quiet word in private about your expectations.
- * Treat the child too delicately- they enjoy banter the same as anyone else!
- * Follow opting out with special treatment or privileges because this can delay gradual participation.
- * Anticipate the child's every need. Instead, hold back, give permission ('It's OK to ...') and create opportunities for them to start taking the lead.
- * Object if the child talks to you through their friends -they could be valuable allies in the child's intervention programme. But do make sure that the child is comfortable enough to communicate with you non-verbally when needed. For example, they could confirm you heard their friend correctly by nodding or shaking their head.
- * Be afraid to say 'Hey, please can you keep the noise down!' as necessary.
- * Be surprised if the child looks confused, does the wrong thing or does nothing. Anxious children are often too tense to process information quickly or accurately, so repeat your instructions quietly and calmly.
- * Spring surprises on the child; instead, prepare them for changes and transitions with photographs, visits and pictorial timetables.
- * Allow the child to become isolated. Actively foster friendships with peers, both in and outside school through games, shared projects, interests and activities.
- * Dwell on what the child *can't* do. Discover their interests and talents and let them shine.©

Other useful handouts

Handout 4 'What to say when ... '

Handout 5 'Selectivemutism is a phobia'

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ENSURING AN ANXIETY-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE SELECTIVE MUTISM

PLEASE DO:

- * Recognise that selective mutism is an anxiety disorder; a phobia of talking which young people can only overcome by taking small steps forward in a controlled way at their own pace. By removing speech anxiety in everyday situations, you will enable young people to benefit fully from an agreed intervention programme.
- * Remember that this is a genuine difficulty and it will get worse if the young person feels any pressure to speak or has a sense of being made into a public spectacle. Have patience and let them speak when they are ready.
- * Engage the young person through their interests and talents, their sense of humour and by asking for their help. Tell them what a good job they did.
- * Include the young person by talking to them in a chatty, friendly way without expecting an answer. Make comments, rather than asking direct questions; for example, 'I'd love to know where this came from, it's gorgeous', rather than 'Where did you get that?'
- * Provide the *opportunity* to speak, rather than making demands; for example, 'I love this colour. I wonder what you used to mix it?', rather than 'How did you make this?'
- * Warmly respond to the young person's attempts to communicate through gesture or whispering, by talking back in a natural way as if they had spoken.
- * Reassure the young person in private that you won't single them out in a group to answer a question, read aloud or demonstrate an activity unless they let you know that *they want to be chosen*. Say that they can start talking as soon as they feel ready but, until then, there are plenty of other ways to get the best out of school, college or work life or their chosen activity. It's OK to laugh or join in when the group speaks in unison - whatever they can manage.
- * Give the young person a means of sharing good news and letting you know if anything has upset them, eg through email, a liaison book or a go-between.
- * Establish communication and build rapport wherever possible by email.
- * Make hands-up, thumbs-up or eye contact and a nod generally acceptable at registration if the young person is struggling to answer.
- * Encourage young people to sit or work with friends they talk to in other settings and ask questions through their friends. Move away to make it easier for them to answer.
- * Tell the class or group that you welcome all forms of contribution - listening, speaking or making notes.

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PLEASE DO:

- * Include activities in which speech is optional, making this clear before you start.
- * Include the young person in other activities by offering alternative forms of communication. For example: holding up, underlining, circling or pointing to their answer; writing on sticky notes, a dry-wipe board or a computer screen; texting; emailing. Ask them which method they prefer for different activities.
- * Provide opportunities to talk in situations that may be less threatening to the young person. For example: 'Please could you take [N] to the lockers and show her where to put her bag?'; 'Why not take your parents to the hall and get them a cup of tea before the rush?'; 'Please help [N]. He's not sure what he's got to do'.
- * Make sure that peers don't pressurise the young person to speak and understand that they will speak in their own time. Check for, and stop, actual or cyber bullying and teasing.
- * Look for positive behaviour and let the young person know how well they are doing.
- * Let the young person sit at the back or side of the classroom to get a good vantage point.
- * Encourage general creativity and expression through art, film making and design.
- * Encourage independence and ensure success. Rather than doing things *for* the young person, do things *with* them initially and then withdraw, or make things *easier*.
- * Have the same expectations of good behaviour as for any other young person.

PLEASE DO NOT:

- * Be hurt or offended when the young person remains silent.
- * Confuse a fixed facial expression with glaring, defiance, being uninterested or smirking.
- * Beg, bribe, persuade or challenge the young person to speak, or make it your mission to get them to talk.
- * Make the young person say 'Hi', 'Please', 'Thank you', etc. They are *not* being rude.
- * Penalise the young person for not talking or tell them they are talking too quietly.
- * Ask direct questions which put the young person on the spot, especially when other people are watching and waiting for an answer. Use comments which they might respond to.
- * Look directly at the young person when you are hoping that they might say something.
- * React when the young person speaks in public. Simply carry on as if they have always spoken, responding positively to what they say, rather than the fact that they spoke.
- * Make the young person repeat themselves in public if you don't hear them.
- * Chastise the young person in public - have a quiet word in private about your expectations.
- * Treat the young person too delicately-they enjoy banter the same as anyone else!

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PLEASE DO NOT:

- * Expect the young person to initiate interaction, even in ways which don't require talking. Initiation is extremely difficult for most individuals with SM. Make sure that you or other people take the lead to enable the young person to find a partner, get help, obtain an item or report a loss, bullying or illness, for example. It will also be important to ensure access to such basics as the toilet, food and water without needing to speak.
- * Follow opting out with special treatment or privileges because this can delay gradual participation.
- * Anticipate the young person's every need. Instead, hold back, give permission ('It's OK to ...') and create opportunities for them to start taking the lead.
- * Allow the young person to become isolated. Actively foster friendships with peers, both in and outside the educational or work setting, through shared projects, interests and activities.
- * Object if the young person talks to you through their friends - they could be valuable allies in the young person's intervention programme. But make sure that the young person is comfortable enough to communicate with you non-verbally when needed; for example, they could confirm the message you received by nodding or shaking their head.
- * Be surprised if the young person looks confused, does the wrong thing or does nothing. Anxious individuals are often too tense to process information quickly or accurately, so repeat instructions quietly and calmly, as necessary.
- * Spring surprises on the young person. Instead, prepare them for changes and transitions with advance visits, timetables and brochures or photographs, as appropriate.
- * Leave the young person out of plans for school or college trips or work experience. These involve environments which are usually much less stressful than the classroom.
- * Dwell on what the young person *can't* do. Discover their interests and talents and let them shine. ©

Other useful handouts

Handout 4 'What to say when ... '

Handout 5 'Selective mutism is a phobia'

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FOR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Ensuring an anxiety-free environment for children and young people who have selective mutism

Student's name [N]: _____ Date of birth: _____

Setting: _____ Year group: _____

Completed by: _____

Purpose: to help identify and eliminate possible causes of anxiety which could be adversely affecting [N]'s self-esteem and progress in communication.

Aim: for staff and family to make appropriate adjustments, where necessary, in order to agree with each statement ().

Communication	Date	Review date
Using non-verbal, written or verbal means (eg talking through a friend), [N] has a way of:		
Gaining attention/acknowledgment		
Protesting/indicating dislikes		
Expressing need to go to the toilet		
Obtaining help/clarification for homework/course work		
Obtaining general help/clarification during the school day		
Making a lunch selection		
Reporting teasing/bullying/illness		
<i>Natural</i> alternative forms of communication are encouraged (eg gesture, pointing to words/pictures/symbols, writing) rather than an unfamiliar alternative communication system		
Participation		
Using either verbal or alternative forms of communication, [N] is routinely able to participate in (add/delete as appropriate):		
Registration/roll-call		
Circle time or 'bring and share' activities		
Reading activities		
Writing/spelling activities		
Class assembly		
PE sessions		
Drama sessions		
School trips/work experience		
Staff do not do things for[N] but <i>with</i> [NL giving whatever support [N] needs in order to manage part of the activity or make some contribution		

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Name of student [N]:

Social relationships and self-esteem	Date	Review date
Staff involve [N] in usual greetings/conversation/banter by using commentary-style talk, rather than asking questions		
[N] is befriended by others in class and is included in class/teamactivities		
[N] spends break/lunch-times with other students		
[N] routinely gains success/acknowledgement through realistic targets and desirable behaviour (eg kindness/taking the lead/physical activity/ responsibility/ participation)		
[N]'s strengths/special interests are recognised/valued by classmates		
Teasing/bullying occurs rarely, if at all, and is addressed to everyone's satisfaction		
Support		
Staff have reassured [N] that he/she will be able to talk in time but there is no rush; meanwhile, there are other ways to participate and have fun		
Peers know they can best help by including [N] in all they do, waiting patiently, not trying to make [N] talk and not saying that [N] <i>can't talk</i>		
[N] has good rapport with at least one adult in the educational setting who is able to offer regular encouragement/support		
[N] is given 1:1 time for curriculum differentiation, rapport building and communication goals, as appropriate (ie little and often, rather than once a week)		
[N] knows that staff members will not single out [N] to talk in class but wait for [N] to volunteer information (until [N] is more comfortable with talking)		
If [N] speaks, staff members are primed to respond warmly but without direct praise or comment (<i>this does not include planned programme targets</i>)		
School/home is in regular contact through a liaison book or email to communicate [N]'s successes/news/concerns/queries/strategies, etc.		
General points		
[N] separates from the parent willingly and is confident about collection arrangements; or can travel to/from school independently		
Apart from rare occasions, [N] smiles frequently (and genuinely- not a fixed smile) and looks relaxed throughout the day		
The seating position allows [N] to observe other people and not feel scrutinised		
[N] eats lunch with his or her peers		
[N] uses the school toilet		
[N] is not given extra attention/privileges for silence/opting out (<i>apart from the 1:1 support necessary to address needs and move forward</i>)		
[N] is allowed to experience some disappointment/frustration as a result of not speaking (eg occasionally misses out) and maintains incentive to change		
Staff members have access to a support network for further information about selective mutism and as a sounding board for their ideas		
A plan is in place to address [N]'s speech anxiety, which has been agreed with student and parent(s)		

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FOR HOME SETTING

Ensuring an anxiety-free environment for children and young people who have selective mutism

Child or young person's name [N]: _____

Completed by: _____

Purpose: to help identify and eliminate possible causes of anxiety which could be adversely affecting [N]'s self-esteem and progress in communication.

Aim: for the family to make appropriate adjustments, where necessary, so that family members and relevant professionals agree with each statement().

Home and community	Date	Review
Talking outside the home is culturally/socially acceptable; if not, permission has been actively given for appropriate settings		
Socialising is modelled and encouraged within the family and [N] is enabled to participate comfortably in social activities with and without parents present		
SM is explained to and/or discussed <i>with</i> [N], rather than in front of [N]		
[N]'s difficulty talking is openly acknowledged by parent(s) and reassurance has been given that it will not last		
Friends, family and members of the community in regular contact with [N] have been educated about SM and have modified their behaviour accordingly		
[N] does not experience distress as a result of teasing or bullying		
[N] is not pressed to talk when clearly uncomfortable but, rather than opting out completely, is helped to participate in other ways		
[N] does not use inappropriate non-verbal communication or whispering when alone with parent(s) because they have learned from parent that it is ineffective		
Parents do not answer for [N]		
[N] gets ready for their educational setting willingly, and travels there either independently or with a parent/peer/sibling, as appropriate to their age		
[N] has the opportunity to play/share activities or communicate with peers out of school hours (includes email, texting, online messaging)		
[N] gets more attention/physical contact when they are succeeding/participating/playing/helping than when they are anxious/shy/opting out		
[N] has a regular physical outlet and gets enough sleep		
[N] has skills, interests or talents to focus on, enjoy and be proud of		
If clear speech is an issue, it is encouraged through modelling, rather than correction		
[N] is self-motivated to improve through the experience and enjoyment of success; in contrast to opting out to avoid failure/correction/criticism		
[N] experiences normal disappointment/frustration as a result of not speaking (eg occasionally misses out) and expresses their desire to talk		
Parent(s) have access to a support network of other parents with experience of selective mutism		
A plan is in place to address [N]'s speech anxiety, and this has been agreed with [N] and their educational setting		

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TARGET SHEET AND ACTION PLAN

TARGET SHEET AND ACTION PLAN

Name: _____ Age: _____ Planning meeting held on: _____ **at** _____

Desired long-term outcome(s): -----

What is happening now/ current situation	What we would like to see happening	Strategies needed to achieve this short- term target	Person(s) responsible for this action	Date to be achieved by

The above actions were agreed by: _____ Review date: _____