

HELPING CHILDREN TO SPEAK: ADVICE FOR RELUCTANT COMMUNICATORS

First Step:

- Tell the child in private that you know that they want to talk but are finding it difficult at the moment. Tell them not to worry because talking will get easier and they don't have to talk straight away. Let them know that they can talk when **they** are ready.



Next Steps:

- Have patience: never force the child to speak, and don't beg, bribe or put them on the spot to speak. Make sure **everyone** is letting the child know it's okay that they're not talking at the moment
- Talk to them about what is happening without expecting an answer. Reward any attempts they make at communication (even nodding or pointing) by talking back naturally to them as if they had spoken.
- Make comments rather than asking questions. This provides the opportunity for them to speak rather than placing a **demand** on them to speak. e.g. "I wonder where this one goes?", "I like the purple one". For more information and advice on using comments see: <https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/making-comments.pdf>
- Use a home-school diary to ensure good communication and to enable you to share news.
- Don't make a big fuss if they do talk. The extra attention might discourage the child from saying anything else.
- Include them in lots of different activities with opportunities for moving, singing and talking together.
- Encourage them to sit, work or play with friends or adults they talk to in other settings.
- Share the above advice with family and friends if the child is reluctant across other settings.