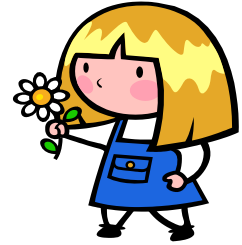


How to Help the Child who is Reluctant to Speak



- Never force me to speak, and don't beg, bribe or challenge me to speak.
- Do reward my speech, or any attempts I make at communication (even nodding or pointing) with a smile.
- Treat me the same way as the others. Make sure you don't give me more attention because I'm reluctant to speak.
- Try to motivate me to speak by including me in class activities - silence can be rewarding in itself. I may get more attention or excused from tasks if I continue to be silent.
- Give the impression that you regard my silence as a lack of knowledge or desire rather than an inability to speak.
- Avoid asking me direct questions. Instead give me opportunities to comment. "I wonder...", "I bet...", "I suppose...", "I guess..." are useful as they invite, rather than demand, a response from me.
- Avoid looking at me directly after you've given me an opportunity to speak.
- Try to find opportunities for me and you to be alone, like Special Time, which might encourage me to speak. Don't anticipate my needs.
- Give me jobs to do which provide opportunities for speaking; e.g. 'Please help (another child) tidy up', 'Can you take (a new child) to the pegs and show her where things go'.
- Concentrate on providing me with an enjoyable relaxed atmosphere where you can gain my trust.
- When I do start talking, don't make a big deal of it. I don't like too much attention.