

## Advice for Reluctant Talkers

A reluctant talker is a child who is able to talk freely in some situations but is silent in others. In these situations the child may use non-verbal communication but doesn't use verbal communication.



### Supporting Reluctant Talkers at home:

- ✓ Let your child know you understand that they have difficulty speaking at times. Tell them they can take small steps when they feel ready and reassure them that talking will get easier.
- ✓ Reassure your child that non-verbal communication, such as smiling and waving, is fine until they feel better about talking.
- ✓ Ask friends and relatives to give your child time to warm up at their own pace and focus on fun activities rather than getting them to talk.
- ✓ As well as verbal reassurance, give them love, support and patience.
  
- ✗ Try not to pressurise or bribe your child to encourage them to speak.
- ✗ Don't praise your child publicly for speaking because this can cause embarrassment. Wait until you're alone with them and consider a special treat for their achievement.
- ✗ Don't avoid parties or family visits, but consider what environmental changes are necessary to make the situation more comfortable for your child.
- ✗ Try not to label your child as non-speaking with other family members or friends.

### Further information:

SMIRA (Selective Mutism Information and Research Association) website:

<http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/>

Parent Handouts from SMIRA:

<http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/information/information-for-parents/#smira>