

Card: what to say, what to avoid

Who it's for: teachers and parents or carers · Linked to the Toolkit: Chapter 7

Overarching principle: we reinforce attempts to communicate, not pressure to speak.
Respond calmly and neutrally to silence, and warmly and with interest to every attempt to communicate, however small.

Helpful	Unhelpful
• valuing attempts to communicate: 'I can see the answer on the card – great, let's carry on' • naming the difficulty as something outside the child: 'it's a false alarm in the head' • calm and time – a few seconds without pressure • a warm response to an attempt, a neutral one to silence	• pressure: 'come on, say something', 'you can do it' • rewards for speaking immediately • ridiculing and comparing • the label 'the one who doesn't speak'; denying the difficulty