

Additional resource –a supplementary tool

‘First week’ quick guide

Who it’s for: teachers • Linked to the Toolkit: Chapters 2–3

*When you are only just noticing the difficulty – here is what to do straight away and what to avoid.
Remember: the first month in a new place is a time of settling in, so do not jump to conclusions.*

✓ Do this straight away	✗ What not to do
• Take the pressure off –do not expect a spoken answer. • Allow the child to answer by gesture, pointing or in writing. • Sit beside the child, not opposite. Give a few calm seconds, and do not insist on eye contact. • Comment on the shared activity instead of asking questions. • Start an observation log – record facts (who, where, what came before, how long). • Reduce the single most demanding expectation (e.g. asking for a meal, asking to go to the toilet) – agree a non-verbal signal.	• Do not comment on the silence (‘come on, say something’, ‘you can do it’). • Do not force the child to speak or to say hello in front of the whole group. • Do not jump to conclusions in the first month. • Do not record the child covertly. • Do not promise rewards for speaking immediately. • Do not attach a label (‘the one who doesn’t speak’).

If the difficulty persists

Prepare your collected observations for a conversation with parents or carers and – if needed – share them with a specialist. The teacher is often the first to notice the difficulty, but it is the specialist who carries out the assessment.