

Handout D3 **Confident talking – the stages of one-to-one interaction**

Stage	Child's presentation	Example of behaviour
0	Absent	Child or young person stays in the bedroom, hides behind a chair or observes activity from a distance.
1	Frozen	Child sits passively or accepts help without moving (eg does not take a ball that is offered; stands motionless while coat is buttoned up).
2	Participates without communication	Child participates silently in activities such as board games or jigsaw puzzles; takes items that are offered (eg a biscuit or crayons); and complies with requests which do not require an answer (eg deals out cards or draws a picture).
3	Uses non-verbal and written communication	Child responds to questions and may even initiate contact through: pointing; nodding or shaking head; tapping; gesture; drawing or writing. Child is relaxed and responds to the adult with a variety of facial expressions.
<b>Talking bridge</b>	Tolerates voice being heard by a bystander	Child talks to or laughs with parent without hiding their mouth in a visitor's or the therapist's presence; talks to other children in the same room as their teacher; talks to family member using a telephone in a public area. Voice may be quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
4	Talks through another person	Child answers when the parent repeats the therapist's question; asks the parent if a person present can play a game with them; talks in a structured activity with an adult but looks at their friend or parent when they speak. Voice may be quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
5	Uses voice	Child vocalises an audible rather than a whispered sound to express emotion, accompany shared play, participate in an activity or directly communicate (eg laughter, humming, sound of police siren, animal noises, letter sounds, 'mmm' for 'yes'). Child reads familiar material aloud on request (reading is a vocal exercise for proficient readers, rather than communication).
6	Communicates with single words	Child says a single word in response to questions or choices or in structured activities such as games. Voice may be very quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
7	Communicates with sentences	Child uses sentences in response to questions or in structured activities such as games or play readings. Child may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>occasionally offer a spontaneous comment</li> <li>only ask questions during structured activities.</li> </ul> Voice may be very quiet but is audible rather than whispered.
8	Conversation	Child has an adult-led, two-way conversation, provided no one else is perceived to be listening. Child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>volunteers spontaneous comments but questions may be limited</li> <li>may not initiate contact or seek help outside planned sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>Note</b>	<p>Whispering is not included in this progression because it is an avoidance of using voice. For the purposes of keeping records, whispering can be regarded as stage 3+.</p> <p>When the child is completely comfortable, 8+ may be observed, for example: unplanned conversation on most topics; child-initiated questions and requests; social language and conversation-fillers (words and phrases that add no meaning but feature in relaxed, uninhibited conversation).</p>	

(Source: *The Selective Mutism Resource Manual*, second edition, 2016, Speechmark Publishing)