ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP CONFIDENT TALKING

Introduction

The following activities are grouped into the eight stages of one-to-one interaction (see Table 5.1 in Chapter 5). However, they can also be used as small-group or whole-class activities during the generalisation process. Select activities according to the child's age, ability and interests, working from low- to high-risk activities (see Tables 10.6 and 10.9 in Chapter 10).

Key to medium- and high-risk activities

Symbol	Type of activity	Description
E	Emotive content	All activities have familiar **factual** content, unless indicated by **E.** Emotive content raises anxiety due to unfamiliarity or uncertainty.
I	Child initiates interaction (unprompted)	The child is **prompted** in all activities, unless indicated by **I**. When it is the child's turn to ask a question, or give an instruction, ensure that they know what to do but then *wait* for them to act. Only prompt with a nod and smile or say 'Your turn' if absolutely necessary.
SS **U**	Semi-structured Unstructured	All activities involve **structured turn-taking** unless indicated by **SS** or **U**. Semi-structured games do not have a fixed turn-taking sequence when played in groups, and the length of each turn is variable. Unstructured turn-taking relies heavily on calling out and spontaneous contributions to maintain balanced participation.
  	Eye contact Physical contact Volume	Certain games may be selected to encourage these aspects of communication.
+	Group activities	Suitable for group work at each stage, eg **6+,7+**.

Key to low-risk activities

Symbol	Type of activity	Description
R	Reading required	Unsuitable for poor or beginner readers.

Providing a greater sense of purpose and enjoyment

Many activities from Stage 3 onwards can be improved by following each successful turn with a token or an action that leads to a pleasing end result. Eg, the child gradually fills a cardboard tube with marbles and pours them down a chute, gains a piece to add to a favourite jigsaw puzzle, or wins a plastic sword, building brick or a throw of the dice, as follows.

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Pop-up Pirate® by Tomy

After their turn, the child is given a small plastic sword to push into a slot in the pirate's barrel. The release mechanism is triggered at random to forcefully eject the pirate's head.

Build a tower

After their turn, the child is given a building brick, cotton reel or domino tile to add to a growing tower. How high will it be before it topples over?

Board games

After their turn, the child throws a dice and moves their counter round the board, towards the 'Finish' line.

Stage 1 Helping the frozen child to relax

Choose activities that are known, or are likely, to interest the child, or follow the child's lead at first. Join in their games, expressing enjoyment and using limited commentary, rather than asking questions. If the child is still watching from the sidelines after a few sessions, the parent or someone else the child is comfortable with should be invited to help them enjoy activities in the new setting.

For example:

- ★ play with a kitten
- ★ build a garage
- ★ make a camp or a hideaway
- ★ paint a picture
- ★ have a dolls' tea party
- ★ play with jumping/popping/wind-up toys
- ★ do jigsaw puzzles or formboards
- ★ look for marbles buried in sand
- ★ make a necklace
- ★ cut out pastry shapes
- ★ print with stamps and stencils
- ★ demonstrate a computer game
- ★ play battery-operated or electronic games.

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Stage 2 Helping the child to relax and participate

Invite the child to participate or assist in Stage 1 activities and gradually introduce more interactive activities, for example:

- ★ make something together (eg a greetings card, a puppet, dinosaur biscuits)
- ★ make a scrapbook or book called 'My School'
- ★ go on a treasure hunt
- ★ throw and catch a ball
- ★ play board games which use dice, counters or spinners
- ★ play 'noughts and crosses' (tic-tac-toe)
- ★ play chess, draughts (checkers) or backgammon
- ★ learn magic tricks.

Physical movement

The value of physical movement is to both help and see that the child is relaxed from head to toe. Action rhymes, music-and-movement activities and games such as 'Simon Says' are performance- rather than goal-orientated, and often not successful on an individual basis. It is best to use them as group activities, so that inhibited children can join in when they are confident that they will not draw too much attention to themselves. Include small movements and actions which are likely to feel more comfortable for quiet children. Also give them the opportunity to explore and try out equipment outside the main lesson.

Simon Says 2+

This classic game is best played in groups. The adult performs actions, giving a command such as 'Touch your toes!', 'Stand up!', 'Scratch your nose!', and so on. The children copy the adult's actions, but only if the command is preceded with 'Simon says …', (eg 'Simon says, put your hands in the air'). If any children copy actions that were not preceded with 'Simon says …', they are out of the game.

Follow the leader 2+

All the children line up behind the leader. The leader then moves around and all the children have to mimic the leader's actions. Add noises to some of the actions, just in case the child who has SM feels comfortable enough to do those too.

Copycat I (only if child volunteers) 2+

The children sit in a circle. One of them is chosen as the leader while a second child (the guesser) waits outside. The child who has SM may dread being picked for either role and it should be made clear at the beginning that only those who volunteer will be chosen. The leader performs actions (the sillier the better!)

which the others must copy, while the guesser stands in the centre of the circle and tries to spot the leader. The followers must be warned not to stare at the leader!

Stage 3 Using non-verbal and written communication

The child is still under no pressure to speak, but some non-verbal communication is now required so that the session can continue. Some games involve mime which is useful as part of a shaping programme. The adult also mimes but should maintain commentary-style talk between their turns so that the sessions are not conducted in silence!

Guessing games



1 Prepare two sets of pictures. Spread out one set on the table and place the other face-down in a pile. The child takes a picture from the pile. The adult has to guess what it is and points to the pictures on the table, asking, 'Is it the duck?', 'Is it the tractor?', etc. The child shakes or nods their head in response and hands over the picture to make a pair when the adult gets it right.

   This is then reversed and the child guesses by pointing to the upturned pictures. If the adult nods or shakes their head without speaking, the child will need to look at them to see whether they are right or wrong. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up. With older children, the introduction of two or three maximum guesses brings an extra element of fun.

2 The child hides an object in the room. The adult guesses where it is by pointing and asking, 'Is it in the cupboard?', 'Is it behind me?', etc. The child responds by shaking their head or nodding. Older children will manage a version of 'You're getting warmer/colder'. As the adult moves around the room, the child can nod when they get nearer, or shake their head if getting further from the object. Some may even use their voice (Stage 5) – 'Mmm' (for 'yes') for getting warmer and 'Uh-oh' (for 'no') for getting colder.

   The game is then reversed, with the child pointing or walking around the room. If the adult also nods or head shakes rather than speaks, a lot of natural eye contact will be generated.

No peeping!

Prepare a set of pictures depicting various body parts. The child chooses a picture by pointing to it or holding it up so that the adult can see it. The adult has to find and point to that part of their own body with their eyes tightly shut. A few mistakes (a finger in the ear or up the nose always goes down well!) often make the child laugh for the first time. Then reverse the roles, with the adult selecting and naming a body part for the child to find.

Picture selection

Prepare two sets of matching pictures. Spread out one set face-up on the table and place the other set in a pile, face-down. The adult works through the pile, one picture at a time, and describes each one. The child must find the matching picture to win the pair. Pictures can be chosen that provide an identical match (eg 'a clown with a blue nose') or an association (eg 'bird' goes with 'nest').

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What's that sound?

Spread out a selection of pictures. Play a series of sounds and the child identifies each one by pointing to the matching picture. Go to www.freesfx.co.uk to download free sound effects.

Memory game

Spread out a selection of pictures on the table and give a clue for each one; for example, 'This is where I go at night-time', 'A hamster lives in this'. The child turns each picture face-down as they solve the clue. Now repeat the clues and the child sees if they can remember where each picture is. If they turn over the right picture, they keep it; if it's the wrong one, they give it to the adult. This really tests the adult's memory too!

Facial expressions

Both the child and the adult have a matching set of pictures or photographs of facial expressions. The adult takes three pictures and makes each facial expression as they place the pictures face-down in a row. They repeat the sequence, pointing to each card in turn. The child selects the corresponding pictures and places them in a row, face-up, before turning over the adult's cards to see whether they match.

Note: if the child copies any expressions, it's a bonus – *don't ask them to do it*.

Letter, number or shape tracing , 3 or 3+

Prepare a matching set of letters (eg Scrabble® tiles), numbers or simple shapes (straight line, wiggly line, circle, etc). Spread out one set on the table; put the other set in a bag. Players take it in turns to take an item from the bag, place it face-down and then *trace* the character on the other person's upturned palm with their finger, while the other person shuts their eyes or looks away. Can they find the matching item? If it is too ticklish on the palm, try the back of the hand, or trace the character on the person's back.

Choices

When offering a choice of two items, rather than inviting the child to point to the one they want, hold out each palm as you say each choice. For example, say 'Hotdog' (hold out your right palm) 'or burger?' (hold out your left palm). The child then pats your left or right palm to indicate their choice.

Guess the action I

Two sets of matching action pictures are used, depicting people performing actions that can easily be mimed (eg sawing, cutting, washing, hammering, driving). One set is spread out face-up on the table; the other set is placed in a pile, face-down. The adult selects a picture from the face-down pile and mimes the action; the child sees how quickly they can find the matching picture in the pile. Then reverse roles.

This is a big step towards real communication. At first, the child's gestures may be very small and close to the body (just as whispering may precede speech).

Mime lotto I

1 Only one board and one set of pictures are required. The adult gives the child the board and takes the cards, which are placed in a pile face-down on the table. One card is selected, but kept out of sight.

The adult mimes what is on the card and the child points to the matching picture on the board in order to win the picture. Work through the pile of cards and, when the board is full, the game is reversed, with the child miming the pictures for the adult.

Note: this is harder than the previous game because miming objects rather than actions requires an extra step of symbolic representation. It is a more conscious process of communicative intent.

2 The same game can be played with any two sets of matching pictures, if appropriate lotto boards are not available. This has the advantage of allowing pictures to be specially selected for their 'mime potential'.

Complete the puzzle I, 👁

The picture shapes are removed from a formboard and given to the child. The adult 'requests' them by miming each object, and the child hands over the appropriate piece. The roles are then reversed. Any actions near the face to represent items such as food, drink, hat, spectacles or cat's whiskers will encourage eye contact.

Build a tower I, 👁, 3+

This activity works best with a group of four to six people. Each person is given items such as play bricks, cotton reels or dominoes to add to a growing tower. Older children could alternate paper cups with playing cards or stack mah-jong tiles. The adult explains that turns are not in strict rotation, so everyone needs to watch carefully to see when it is their turn to add to the tower.

The adult starts by placing an item in the centre, then looks at and nods at one of the others, to indicate that it is their turn to go next. This person places an item and nods at someone else. Repeat this until the tower topples over!

Draw a person/house/car ... I, 👁, 3+

The adult tells the group members what they are going to draw and starts by drawing one part such as a circle for a person's head. The adult then places the paper and pen in the centre of the group and nods at one of the others to indicate that it is their turn. That person adds another component to the drawing, replaces the paper and pen and nods at someone else. Repeat this until the drawing is complete.

Note: children may not initially make eye contact when they nod in this and the previous activity. However, they will need to turn their head towards the appropriate person to make their intention clear. They will certainly need to look at the other group members' faces to spot when it is their turn, so these are good activities for allowing eye contact to develop naturally.

Stage 4 Talking through other people

At this stage, the child allows the adult to hear their voice, but is not required to speak directly to them. Voice recordings and conversations with close friends or family make a useful 'talking bridge'. For example, the child might:

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- ★ record their voice and play it back to the adult
- ★ play a game with family members with the adult present
- ★ work in a pair with a classmate within earshot of the adult
- ★ talk in unison with another child
- ★ play a turn-taking game where they talk to a friend or parent, rather than the adult.

Activities from Stages 6 and 7 will therefore be suitable in certain contexts, plus any of the following suggestions.

Whispering game 4+

This classic communication game must be played in a group, with the child who has SM sitting next to someone they talk to freely in private. Sentences or messages are written on cards. The adult selects a card and whispers the message to the child next to them. The message is passed round the group until it reaches the last child who says the message aloud. This is compared with the original message to see whether it has been distorted, often with amusing results! Different children can take it in turns to start off the game.

Four corners 4+

This is the whispering game without the whispering. A child stands in each corner of the hall or playground and runs on to the next child to pass the message on. This can be presented as a *memory* rather than a talking game, but make it clear that there is no need to whisper.

Chanting in unison with peers 4+

Ask the group, including the child who has SM, to say any of the following in unison.

- ★ Number sequences: counting up in multiples of one, two, five or ten.
- ★ Days of the week
- ★ Months of the year
- ★ Letters of the alphabet
- ★ Rhymes and songs
- ★ Repeated lines from familiar stories

Voice recordings

Suitable recording devices for the next two activities include Talking Tins, Talking Postcards and Language Master® cards (see Appendix F, 'Talking resources'). The third activity needs just one device, so a tape recorder, smartphone, tablet or computer could also be used.

Talking hide-and-seek

Hide one of the child's favourite toys and play a series of recorded clues that lead to it by telling the child where to go next. For example:

★ Look in the garden shed.

★ Go to the smallest room in the house.

★ Look under your bed.

Then it is the child's turn to hide the toy and set some clues for you!

Treasure hunts

The adult records a series of simple clues. The child listens to the first clue and records the answer without the adult present. If correct, the child and the adult go to that place and find another clue. This is repeated until a prize is found. This is a good activity for talking in different places. For example:

★ This room is where we have lunch.

★ Where do I keep the stars?

★ What's our class hamster called?

★ What colour is your games bag?

To make it even simpler, the adult can record statements that the child has to respond to by recording 'Yes' or 'No', or 'True' or 'False'. For example:

★ We have lunch in the classroom.

★ The stars are kept in the drawer.

★ Our hamster is called George.

★ Your games bag is red.

Beat the clock

The child hides one to five objects around the room and records the places to look. The adult then listens to the recording and has one minute to find them.

Turn-taking games with an existing talking partner 4+

Single-word Stage 6 games are played in strict rotation, so that the child who has SM only needs to talk to their parent or a friend, and is not required to respond directly to the new adult. Suitable activities include 'Pairs', 'Association Pairs' and 'Letter, number or shape tracing'.

When the child can speak comfortably to their parent or friend, the order is reversed, so that they address the new adult. They may not make eye contact with the new adult at this stage but don't request this –

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wait to see if it develops naturally. When the child's talking partner leaves the game, the child is working at Stage 6 level, having bypassed Stage 5.

Stage 5 Using voice to make sounds or read aloud

The Stage 5 activities can be bypassed unless the child is using a shaping or reading approach to elicit speech.

Sounds

Several of the following activities do not require voice but are included to help the child gradually work towards using their voice. There is a certain order of sounds that children will feel most comfortable with: the greater the articulatory effort, and the closer the child perceives the sound to resemble actual speech, the more anxiety they experience. The order is roughly as follows, with the easiest first. However, it is mainly younger children who enjoy the animal and object sounds. Note that voice is used only in sounds 7–9 and 12–15.

1 Percussion instruments that make quiet sounds with small movements (eg triangle).

2 Instruments that require blowing and sucking (eg recorder, mouth-organ, whistle).

3 Percussion instruments that make loud sounds with large movements (eg drum, cymbal).

4 Body sounds not involving the mouth (eg clapping, tapping).

5 Sounds made with the mouth but no voice required (eg blowing, whistling, tongue-clicking, popping cheeks with a finger).

6 Sounds that represent an animal or object and do not require voice (eg hissing for a snake, 'shh' for a sleeping baby, tongue-clicking for a horse, wind blowing, creaking door).

7 Noise-makers that require humming (eg kazoo, comb and paper).

8 Sounds using voice that represent animals or objects (eg car engine, telephone ring, dog barking, lion roaring).

9 Animal noises or other sounds that are represented in word form (eg 'moo', 'baa', 'ping', 'woof').

10 Whispered letter sounds not involving voice or lips ('s', 'sh', 'h', 't', 'k', 'ch').

11 Whispered letter sounds involving lips but not voice ('f', 'p').

12 Letter sounds – adding voice to whispered sounds (eg 'pu', 'tu', 'ku').

13 Letter sounds involving voice but not lips ('d', 'g', 'n', 'l', 'j', 'y', 'z').

14 Letter sounds involving voice and lips ('b', 'm', 'v', 'w').

15 Vowel sounds (eg 'a', 'e', 'i', 'ar', 'ee', 'oo').

Musical instrument copycat I

The child does not need to use their voice until the kazoo is introduced (see below). The child and the adult take it in turns to identify various noise-makers when the sounds are made out of sight. If a matching set is available, leave one set visible and use the other one to make sounds behind a screen (placing them in a large box tipped over on its side works just as well). If only one set is available, each person turns away or shuts their eyes and then copies with the same instrument, rather than using their own set.

Initiation is best encouraged by each person being the sound-maker three times consecutively before swapping round. For a harder and increasingly physical version of this activity, make two or three sounds in sequence for the other person to remember and copy.

Add a kazoo when the child is confidently making sounds by blowing and sucking.

Musical instrument conversations I, 👁, 5+

A group of children create a 'conversation' of sounds using the instruments from the previous activity. One child plays a few notes or sounds and then looks at another person in the group to continue. Try to create different 'moods', eg happy, sleepy, angry, secretive.

Hand Snap! 🖐, I, 5+

The child does not need to use their voice for this, so it is a good introduction which helps them get used to making a noise. Use any pack of cards which have pictures repeated several times. Normal playing cards will do.

Shuffle and deal out all of the cards. Each player places a card on a central pile in turn and, as soon as two matching cards are played consecutively, the first person to knock on the table wins the cards. For a more physical variation, claim the cards by covering the pile with one or both hands. This may be too invasive if children are particularly 'frozen' or oversensitive to touch.

Silly noises

Experiment with coughing, sneezing, panting, whistling, tongue-clicking, blowing raspberries and popping cheeks!

Puppet play

Play a silly sentence game with glove puppets. The adult's puppet 'reads out' sentences such as 'Fish can swim' and 'Cats can ride bicycles'. The child's puppet responds with a squeak for 'Yes' and 'Uh-oh!', with their lips together, for 'No' (like the buzzer noise used for a wrong answer in the television game show *Family Fortunes*).

Sound lotto I

Play like 'Mime lotto' in Stage 3 but choose or make pictures that can be represented by sound. For example, a burst tyre ('pssss'), car, train, telephone, bell, gun, water, creaking door. Choose sounds that do not require voice initially.

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Animal noises

Adapt Stage 3 activities such as 'Lotto' and 'Complete the puzzle' by choosing animal pictures and making animal sounds, rather than using gesture.

Visual feedback

Producing sounds can be made more fun by providing some form of visual feedback, as follows.

Sound-activated toys

The child makes a noise to make something happen. Find toys that respond to sound. For example, we have found a worm that rises out of an apple, a dog that turns somersaults, and a flower that sways from side to side. After a while, make a rule that sounds are made from the throat – loud sighs are a good start.

Move the sound gauge (eg on an audio recorder, a computer recording device)

Any noise will do at first! Then see which letters of the alphabet have most effect.

Computer visualisations (eg Microsoft® Windows Media Player)

Spectacular displays are possible when making even short sounds into a microphone and children can be encouraged to experiment with different visualisations. (Alchemy-Random is our favourite!)

Letter sound challenge

★ Which letter sounds will blow out the candle? ('p' and a very hard 'h'!)

★ Which letter sounds move the tissue or feather across the table? ('p', 't', 'k', 'f', 'sh', 'h').

★ Which letter sounds get a response from the sound-activated toy?

★ Which letter sounds make the best visualisations? (see above)

Tactile feedback

Whispered sounds are made by airflow alone, but voiced sounds are made when the vocal cords vibrate. This vibration can be felt against your fingertips, when placed at the base of your throat over your 'voice-box', or as a tickle in your lips when humming against a balloon, no matter how quietly you speak.

Encourage children to produce sound as they breathe out (lips together or only slightly apart is fine) and feel the vibration as they 'switch their voice-box on'.

Humming

Take it in turns to 'Guess that tune', playing with a kazoo or a comb and paper. The child will need to either write down or select their answer. Progress gradually to humming without using the comb or the kazoo.

Letter sounds – copying, recalling or recording

Follow the order suggested at the beginning of this section. At first, the child may find it easier to record the sound with the adult outside the room. Talking Postcards and Language Master® cards are useful for adding sounds to a letter of the alphabet or a classroom phonic picture.

Stopwatch

Who can say 't' 10 times the fastest? Then try other sounds such as 'k', 'l', 'p'.

Reading aloud 5 or 5+

Reading standard text aloud does not involve communication: the individual is not responsible for the choice of words and no messages are exchanged with the listener. Therefore, many older children can read aloud before they can speak freely, provided that the material is well within their reading age. Reading aloud can lead to relaxed communication by gradually introducing taking turns. See the games below, then progress to Stage 6 and 7 activities involving written questions or prompts, before fading out text completely.

The following reading activities are suitable for using one-to-one, in groups and, eventually, in the classroom.



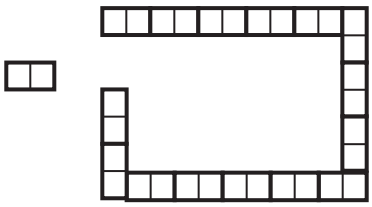
Until children report that they are comfortable with reading aloud in class, ensure that they are forewarned and have a chance to look at the text beforehand.

Word dominoes R

Preparation

Take a pack of small index cards, or cut out similar-sized cards, and divide each with a line, as shown below. Write a word on each side of the line while making a large rectangle of 16–20 cards. The word on the right-hand side of one card must link to a word on the left-hand side of another. Eventually, the last card will link to the first one.

Examples of possible links



- ★ Characters: Pooh–Tigger; Bart–Homer Simpson; Beauty–Beast.
- ★ Animal babies: elephant–calf; swan–cygnet; fox–cub.
- ★ Sports terms: badminton–shuttlecock; tennis–deuce.
- ★ Past tense verbs: sit–sat; go–went; think–thought.

How to play

Shuffle the cards, deal out four each and place the remaining cards face-down in a central pile. The first player chooses a card to play and reads out both words. If the next player has a match to either of these words, they place their card so that it links to the corresponding word and read out the two words that belong together. If they don't have a match, they say 'Pass' and take the top card from the central pile. Repeat until all of the cards are played or until one player has placed their last card.

Silly sentences R

Phrases for people, actions and places are written on cards, shuffled and placed in three piles. Players take it in turns to turn over three cards and read out the silly sentence. For example:

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★ The postman boiled an egg in a handbag.

★ My teacher fell in a puddle, wearing a pair of pyjamas.

Reading pairs R

The first lines of well-known nursery rhymes are written on card, cut in half, and placed face-down on the table. Players take it in turns to turn over and read out two cards, until they make a matching pair which they keep. Cards that don't match are returned to the central pool. For example:

Baa baa Black Sheep	sat on a tuffet	✗
Little Miss Muffet	have you any wool?	✗
Little Jack Horner	sat in the corner	✓

This can be adapted for older children with facts or definitions. Make sure there are some funny possibilities such as 'Prince Charles is the largest British mammal'!

The Moon is	the capital city of England	✗
London is	about 384,400 km away	✗
The red deer is	the largest British mammal	✓

Pot the Lobster (Crossbow Education Ltd, ages 7 to adult) R

With a couple of small tweaks, this rummy-based card game is ideal for children with SM who read well. The players take and discard cards until they have a set of cards that make a silly sentence. As an extra clue, correct sequences produce a picture of a lobster.

Easy version

Read the sentence out loud to win the game.

Harder version E

After reading out the sentence, the child turns the cards face-down and must remember it for another round. When it is their turn again, the child must say their sentence from memory. Finally, turn the cards back over to reveal the sentence and score one point per word correctly remembered.

Vocabulary Sentence Rummy (Crossbow Education Ltd, age 7–adult) R

Another card game played with the enjoyable rummy format. See Crossbow's website for ideas on how to make more reading rummy games: www.crossboweducation.com/Rushall's-inclusion-zone/Get-in-the-zone/teaching-with-rummy

Telling jokes R, E

Children bring in jokes from party crackers, comics or joke books to read out loud to the class or group. Then everyone votes for the funniest joke. 'Knock-knock' jokes are a good format to introduce interactive turn-taking.

Reading from a shared text R

Participants take it in turns to read aloud a line from a poem or one or two sentences of text. Other languages appeal to some children as it makes them feel on a more equal footing with their peers. Also, there is not the same association with conversation in their own language.

Play readings R

The participants each take on a different character from the script of a play. Then they swap roles.

Narrator R

The child is the narrator in a class activity or a school assembly and reads out loud from a script.

Spokesperson R, E

The class members work in small groups to produce, for example, a list of pros and cons for a proposed school rule, or three things that work well and three that could be improved in something they have designed. The child is the designated spokesperson for their group and reads out the list, while another class member fields any questions.

Reading own work R, E

The child reads out bullet points from either a PowerPoint presentation which they have prepared or a good example of creative writing.

Questionnaires R, I

The child prepares and presents a questionnaire to peers or staff members, reading the questions from a clipboard and recording their answers. The participants will need to agree in advance because, at this stage, the child will be unable to get their attention and explain. It will then be up to the child to approach each person, and they should aim to end the interaction by saying 'Thank you'.

Stage 6 Using single words to communicate

Silly or sensible? ('Yes' or 'No' questions)

Young children seem to find the visual images generated by this activity hilarious! It can be adapted to any age or vocabulary level.

Write the questions on cards and select them from a pile or bag. Let the child know how many they are required to answer before starting. Don't put the card down and select another until the child answers: nodding and shaking their head is not allowed! Older children can do this as a timed activity: how many cards can they get through in one minute?

Below is a selection of questions to begin with but the list is endless. (A good ice-breaker question is 'Do noses run?'!)

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Examples of yes/no questions (select according to age and ability)

- ★ Do pencils eat?
- ★ Do babies cry?
- ★ Do dogs bark?
- ★ Do cats fly?
- ★ Do flowers dance?
- ★ Do children eat?
- ★ Do pencils sing?
- ★ Do elephants read?
- ★ Do cars swim?
- ★ Do trains rush?
- ★ Do teachers talk?
- ★ Do footballs roll?
- ★ Do biscuits break?
- ★ Do frogs jump?
- ★ Do carrots run?
- ★ Do spaceships walk?
- ★ Do policemen drive?
- ★ Do parents work?
- ★ Do mice squeak?
- ★ Do centipedes crawl?
- ★ Do parrots paint?
- ★ Do stones float?
- ★ Do blades cut?
- ★ Do rulers measure?
- ★ Do rocks burn?
- ★ Do volcanoes erupt?
- ★ Do sausages chuckle?
- ★ Does lipstick melt?
- ★ Do mirrors dream?
- ★ Do icicles pout?
- ★ Does nitrogen freeze?
- ★ Do stethoscopes amplify?

Extend the activity by taking it in turns to read out and answer the questions. **R**

Pick a sweet

Ask the child to choose a sweet by naming the colour of it. And keep a toothbrush handy!

Pairs **I**

Spread out one set of cards is, face-down, on the table, and place an identical set face-down in a pile. Take it in turns to select a card from the pile and tell the other person what they need to find. If they find the matching card, they keep the pair. If they turn over the wrong card, they replace it and the original card goes back to the bottom of the pile. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up.

There are many suitable cards available such as Animal Snap! but be sure to choose pictures that can be described with a single word. You can also make your own cards with stamps, stickers or photographs, for example:

colours	animals	modes of transport	classmates
cartoon characters	familiar objects	actions (verbs)	food

Association Pairs **I**

One set of cards is spread out, face-up on the table, and a matching set is placed face-down in a pile. Take turns to select a card from the pile and tell the other person what you have. The other person finds the pair and removes both cards. Continue until all of the cards have been paired up.

There are many suitable cards available but you can also make your own. Choose one type of association at a time, for example:

Opposites:	long and short	Paired objects:	needle and thread
Homophones:	flour and flower	Colours:	sun and buttercup
Occupations:	doctor and stethoscope	Classification:	ruler and thermometer

Older children can play the same game with written words, rather than pictures. **R**

Finish the sentence

Sentence completion is a good precursor to answering questions because it taps into more automatic, rote-learned language. Younger children can work with pictures; older children (and adults) can work with numbers and phrases.

Pictures

A selection of pictures is spread out on the table and the adult cues in each one with an unfinished sentence, for example:

★ 'At night-time I go to …?'

★ 'I drive a …?'

★ 'Birds make nests in …?'

The child picks up and names the corresponding picture to finish the sentence. Later, the adult sets a target to clear the pictures within a certain time limit, using an egg-timer or a stopwatch.

Numbers

This is a useful follow-up to rote-counting. The adult cues in the child with sentences that can be finished with a number, being careful to match the information to their general knowledge. For example:

★ 'Two and two make …?'

★ 'Insects have six legs but spiders have ...?'

★ 'Clickety-click, sixty …?'

★ 'The number that comes after eight is …?'

★ 'At midnight the clock strikes …?'

★ 'The prime minister lives at number …?'

Make it feel like a reading activity by giving the child the numbers in random order. **R**

The child then finds and either crosses off or removes each number as they say it.

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Automatic phrases

Cue in the individual with phrases that are well known to them and ask them to supply the last word. For example:

★ 'It's raining cats and …?'; 'I'm feeling on top of the …?';

★ 'Socks and ...?'; 'Bread and …?'; Thunder and …?'

★ 'As cool as a …?'; 'As brave as a …?';

★ 'A loaf of …?'; 'A cup of …?'; 'A flock of …?'

Alternatively, choose a theme such as football teams, famous buildings or song titles. For example:

★ 'The Eiffel …?'; 'The Leaning Tower of …?'; 'Canterbury …?'

★ 'Blackburn …?'; Leeds …?'; 'Wolverhampton …?'

★ 'Away in a …?'; 'Hark the herald angels …?'

Picture naming on demand I

1. Place picture cards face-down on the table. Take turns at turning over a card, naming what is in the picture and 'posting' the card in a pretend postbox.

2. Spread out picture cards face-up. Take turns at naming a picture that the other person has to find and post. This could be a timed activity to 'beat the clock'.

3. Adapt (1) and (2) to be reading activities with words on the cards. **R**

What's that sound? E

Play a series of sounds and ask the child to identify each one to win the matching picture. (Go to the website www.freesfx.co.uk to download free sound effects.) Choose sounds that can be described with one word initially (eg cat, hammer), then gradually include sounds that could take the child to Stage 7 (eg baby crying, dripping tap, man laughing).

Feely bag E

Place an item in a cloth bag and ask the child to identify it by touch alone.

Bingo or lotto I

Use a traditional game board with numbers or pictures on it. First, the adult is the caller and continues until the child has filled up a board. Then the child calls for the adult.

Snap! I

See Hand Snap! at Stage 4 but play using the traditional rules, the child calling out 'Snap!' when two identical cards are played consecutively.

Note: many children can play this with an adult but they have great difficulty being the first to call out in a group. It is then better initially to find group activities with a fixed turn-taking sequence and no time-pressure.

Letter, number or shape tracing  , E

Repeat the Stage 3 activity but with only one set of letters (eg Scrabble® tiles), numbers or simple shapes, which are placed in a bag. Rather than identifying the selected character by either pointing to it or picking it up, each player *says* what they think the other person has traced on their palm.

I-Spy and Colour I-Spy  , E

Traditional I-Spy is played with letter names or sounds, while Colour I-Spy is played with colours. to make it more accessible to younger children. For example, 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'C' *or* '… something that's blue'.

At Stage 6, the adult says, 'You spy with your little eye, something that's …', to keep the activity at a single word level. At Stage 7, the child also says the opening sentence.

Questions requiring a single-word answer

The adult asks a question either about a picture card (hidden from the child's view) or from a list. The child wins the card for a correct answer, or receives a token as suggested at the beginning of this appendix in 'Providing a greater sense of purpose and enjoyment'. The child says 'Pass' if they are stuck and the adult gets the card or token. There is a selection of questions opposite but the list is endless.

Reading aloud with questions R

After reading out a short passage of text, the child answers one to four questions that can be answered by a single word found in the text.

Tell Me Quiz (Rockets Toys, age 6 to adult) R, E

The child answers a question, read to them by the adult, beginning with the letter they get when they spin the wheel. Questions are divided into two sets for different ages. You can make your own version by writing questions on cards which are placed in a central pile and choosing letters from a bag (eg Scrabble® tiles). Children do seem to love the spinner though!

Extend this activity by taking it in turns to read out and answer the questions. **R, I, E**

Solve it E

The adult gives clues about an animal, a classmate or an object, and the child has to see how quickly they can think of the answer. For example, the answer could be a word or a picture on a card, which the child wins when they answer successfully.

Picture clues I, E

The players take turns at picking up a word or a picture from a central pile. They must now draw it, adding one component at a time until the other player recognises it and says the word or picture on the card.

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Examples of questions for single-word answers (select according to age and ability)

Numbers		**Colours**	
How many ... have I/you got?	eyes	What colour is/are …?	grass
	necks		snow
	noses		blood
	hands		the sky
	fingers		daffodils
	legs		the sun
	toes		carrots
How many legs has a ... got?	horse		emeralds
	spider		rubies
	penguin		sapphires
	kangaroo		bananas
	fish		crows
How many:	wheels on a bicycle?	**Personal facts**	**E**
	socks in a pair?	What's your name?	
	days in the week?	How old are you?	
	months in a year?	How old is your brother/sister?	
	hours in a day?	What is his/her name?	
	numbers on a dice?	What is your door number?	
	sides on a square?	How many people live in your house?	
	sides on a triangle?	What is your teacher's name?	
	sides on a rectangle?	What is the name of your pet?	
	cards in a pack?	What colour is your car?	

Functions	**E**	**Animals**	**E**
What do you ...	sleep in?	What can ...	swim?
	write with?		fly?
	cut with?		gallop?
	throw?		bark?
	wear on your feet?		squeak?
	wear on your head?		make a nest?
	ride?		make a burrow?

Note: questions become increasingly difficult when: **E**

- ★ there is more than one answer
- ★ the child is not sure that you will understand them
- ★ an assumption has been made (eg that they have a pet)
- ★ the child does not know the answer.

Classification games

1 Children pick a card and say which family it belongs to. This can be done very simply by sorting any pack of picture cards into groups (eg 'jumper' = clothes, 'potato' = vegetable). Or play it as a game with a theme, for example:

   ★ a shopping game where the children have to decide which shop to go to for each item on their list

   ★ a house game where the furniture needs sorting into different rooms.

2 Children select a category and then think of an item that belongs to it. **E**

As the game gets harder, they have to think of two or three items (good preparation for Stage 7). See below for some starter items – there are lots more!

animals	birds	buildings	clothes
colours	countries	desserts/puddings	drinks
films	flowers	food	footwear
fruit	jewellery	lessons	musical instruments
occupations	pets	rivers	tools
towns	toys	transport	vegetables

Favourites **E**

As for 'Classification games' but, when picking a category, the children have to state their favourite colour, drink, teacher, and so on.

Alphabet Strings **E**

Each person takes turns at adding a word to the string; each new word must begin with the last letter of the previous word. Repeats are not allowed. Make it harder with a theme and say 'Pass' if stuck. For example:

★ names: Edward, David, Dana, Amin …

★ food: potato, orange, egg, granola …

Passing on a message **I**

The child is asked to find out something from an obliging adult by taking them a written message; for example, 'Please tell Jack how many exercise books you need'. If the child has difficulty approaching, the obliging adult asks whether they need anything and answers the question verbally when the child hands over the piece of paper: for example, 'Please tell [name] I need six books'. The child returns to the original adult and tells them the answer.

When the child is comfortable with this, explain how to get the obliging adult's attention; for example, by knocking on the door, or walking up to them and holding out the note.

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Hangman (depending on age and ability) I

The child thinks of a word and writes down the corresponding number of blank spaces. The adult tries to work it out by suggesting different letters of the alphabet. If correct, the child writes the letter in the appropriate space; if not, a section is added to a sketch of gallows. If the child completes the gallows, the adult loses. Then swap roles and repeat.

Battleships I

The object of the game is to sink your opponent's fleet before they sink yours. Each player has a 10 × 10 square on which they fill in the squares to depict various vessels (see Handout A1 on page 478). A second 10 × 10 square is used to record the hits and misses when attacking the other player.

Players take it in turns to target one of their opponent's squares, hoping that they will score a direct hit. When successful, they are told what type of vessel has been struck, and this helps guide their next 'missile'.

This is great fun, and a useful lead into Stage 7, as the child is actually saying two 'words' together as they name the squares ('D4', 'E9', etc). In response, single words only are required ('hit', 'miss', 'submarine', 'tanker', etc).

Turn up the volume

Play games such as Alphabet Strings, Hangman and Battleships, sitting either back-to-back or on opposite sides of the room. The child will need to raise their voice when the adult says 'Pardon?', 'Sorry, I didn't hear that', etc.

Have some blowing practice first because it takes relaxed shoulders, a deeper breath and more 'push' from the lungs to increase volume – the effort does not come from the throat. For example:

★ Blow enormous bubbles and long streams of bubbles with bubble solution and a wand.

★ Blow the upturned cardboard tube from the inside of a toilet roll along the table. (It takes skill and breath control not to knock it over!)

★ Play blow-football with a table-tennis ball or scrunched-up ball of tissue paper.

Group turn-taking 6+

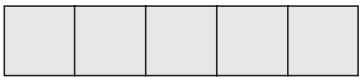
When introducing new people and increasing the group size, stick to a fixed turn-taking sequence initially. Repeat familiar Stage 6 single-word activities or Stage 5 reading games which the child plays well on a one-to-one basis. Each child will be prompted by the adult in turn.

For turn-taking sequences where children talk to the person *next* to them, rather than the adult, use Stage 6 activities such as 'Pairs', 'Association Pairs', 'Silly or Sensible?', 'Tell Me Quiz', 'Alphabet Strings' and 'Letter, number or shape tracing', plus the following activities.

Handout A1 BATTLESHIPS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

Add to grid:



1 battleship



5 submarines

2 tankers





3 cruisers

BATTLESHIPS!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

Find and sink:



1 battleship



5 submarines

2 tankers





3 cruisers

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Rote sequences 6+

Counting drills

Take it in turns to say a number, counting up in multiples of one, two, five or ten. Continue the sequence to an agreed number and then repeat it in the opposite direction.

All change!

Working with rote sequences (such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year or letters of the alphabet), the adult tries to catch out the next person by raising a hand or crossing their legs to indicate a change of direction.

Random turn-taking I, 

This activity needs at least four participants. Working with rote sequences such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year or letters of the alphabet, each person says one item and indicates the person to go next by looking at them and nodding. At first, children often nod *after* they speak but, as they speed up, the activity more closely approximates conversational gesture, with the aim of speaking and nodding at the same time. Only a very small nod is needed, with the emphasis on a natural increase in eye contact.

The longest sentence in the world E, 6+

Each person adds a word to a sentence to set a 'world record'. There is only one catch – the word 'and' can only be used once!

Name throwing 6+

This is a good warm-up activity, which helps participants to connect at a social level. Whoever starts points to someone else in the circle. If this is done with the left hand, the person pointed to says the name of the person on their left, and vice versa. Then it is their turn to point to whoever they choose. Aim to play for 30 seconds without a mistake, and then everyone swaps places.

Pictionary™ (Mattel Games, age 8 to adult) I, E, U, 6+

This is a drawing game in which players take turns drawing a word while the other players in their team call out to guess what it is within one minute.

Reading will be required so they know what to draw, unless picture prompts are used.

Stage 7 Using phrases or sentences to communicate

Many of the activities in Stage 7 are extensions of Stage 6 activities, and lead on from a single-word activity, almost in the same breath. Ensure that there is a balance of activities, so the child both responds to questions and initiates, by asking questions and giving clues or directions. There is an increasing emphasis on more emotionally charged questions where the child does not have an answer or cannot be certain that their answer is correct.

Pick two sweets

This is a very gentle introduction to combining words. The child chooses two sweets from a selection by saying the colours. Saying 'X, Y' may naturally lead them to say 'X and Y'. Keep a toothbrush handy!

Colour sequences I

The child says three or more single words together as a lead into phrases and sentences. Players each need a tub of plastic interlocking cubes. Take it in turns to make a colour sequence of three cubes initially, and keep it hidden while describing it to your partner, eg 'Red, blue, blue'. The other player has to make the same sequence, and keeps both sequences if they match. This is a good incentive to catch out your partner with a sequence that is too long for them to remember!

'Yes' or 'No' questions R, I

This is mainly a reading exercise but the children make up the questions themselves, which is good preparation for Stage 7 communication. Before the game starts, both child and adult write down three to five questions about each other which can be answered 'Yes' or 'No' (finding out each other's likes, dislikes and habits works well). The pieces of paper are folded up and put in the middle of the table or in a bag. Then take it in turns to select a question and read it out for the other person to answer. For example:

★ 'Do you watch [name of television programme]?'

★ 'Have you got a pet?'

★ 'Do you like spiders?'

★ Can you swim?

The children may introduce questions which can't be answered by 'Yes' or 'No' – accept this without comment as it moves into the next activity, 'Pot-luck questions'.

Pot-luck questions R, I, E

Play as above but now anything goes! Ask the children to write down questions that start with words such as 'Who', 'What', 'Where', 'When' and 'How'. These usually require more than a single-word answer. For example:

★ What is your favourite television programme?

★ How far can you swim?

★ Where do you live?

Fish for pairs I

Extend the Stage 6 'Pairs' activity by dealing out five to seven playing cards each and putting the remaining cards face-down in a central pile. If players can make a pair, they put it on the table and play with the remaining cards in their hand.

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Then the first player requests a match for one of their cards by asking, 'Have you got _____?'. If the second player has this card, they must hand it over, and the first player may request another item. If the second player does not have the requested card, they say 'No', which signals the end of the first player's turn. The first player now picks up the top card from the central pile to add to the cards they are holding; if it gives them a pair, they put it on the table immediately. It is then the second player's turn to request a card. Continue until one player has paired up all of their cards.

Lotto I

Take it in turns to be the caller. Use boards or selections of cards with similar pictures so that the child will have to expand the description before the picture can be identified. For example, 'the *happy* clown', 'the boy *with red trousers*', 'the bird *in the tree*'.

I-Spy and Colour I-Spy I, E

See Stage 6 for instructions.

'Yes', 'No' or 'I don't know' questions E

Ask a selection of simple 'Yes/No' questions such as 'Is grass green?' and 'Is snow black?', but mix in a few questions that the child could not possibly know the answer to. For example:

★ Is my middle name Fred?

★ Have I got a tissue in my pocket?

★ Is my birthday in June?

★ Was the school built in 1972?

Later, mix in questions that are simply too difficult, to give the child practice at responding appropriately. Stress that it's OK not to know the answer. For example:

★ What's 35 times 126?

★ How deep is the Atlantic Ocean?

★ Where will you be living 20 years from now?

★ How do you say 'tickle' in French?

Yes! No! Game (Paul Lamond Games, age 8 to adult) R, I

This game involves answering in phrases and is great practice to expand on simple 'yes' and 'no' answers which can sound rather blunt or uninterested. The game includes a series of question cards and a bell. One player reads out the questions, the faster the better to trip up the other player. The other player must answer them *without saying* 'Yes' or 'No'. When they do, swap roles and repeat the game.

Finish the sentence **R**

Use easy sentences which the child has to read aloud, supplying the missing word. For example:

For breakfast I had _____.	A hat goes on your _____.
My eyes are _____.	A boot goes on your _____.
My hair is _____.	A car goes on the _____.
Today it is _____.	A boat goes on the _____.
My birthday is in _____.	A plane goes in the _____.

Guess Who? (MB Games, age 6 to adult) **I, 7 or 7+**

This popular game has a repetitive language format which provides a comfortable structure for asking questions. It can be played with one or two players on each side, taking it in turns to ask questions such as 'Is it a man?', 'Is he wearing glasses?', to identify a character by a process of elimination. You can make your own version using photographs of children in the class or pictures of famous people or cartoon characters.

Guess what? **I, SS**

Using picture or word cards, place them face-down in a central pile. Take it in turns to select one and give clues to elicit the target word from your partner. For example:

Target word = 'socks'

Child: 'They go on your feet'.	Adult: 'Shoes.'
Child: 'You put them on *before* your shoes'.	Adult: 'Socks.'

Child gives the card to the adult or places it face-up in a discard pile.

Instructions **I**

Using a cue card, the child must tell the adult what to draw, or how to move objects on the table into the same position. Preposition cards and mapping work are useful here. For example:

★ Put the spider in the bath.

★ Put the pig behind the tractor.

★ Draw a blue circle on a red line.

★ Draw a line from C3 to G6, and from G6 to J3.

The adult may seek clarification if needed (eg 'Which pig?'). Later, encourage the child to give clarification early if it looks like the adult is about to make a mistake: **SS**

Questions where a one-word answer won't do **E**

'Where?', 'When?', 'What happened?', 'How?' and 'Why?' questions tend to elicit phrases rather than single words, with a greater range of possible answers. 'Why–Because' cards are useful and help to demonstrate that there can sometimes be several answers to the same question.

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Alternatives E

Ask the child questions which require more than one answer, for example:

★ How many uses are there for a piece of string?

★ What reasons can you think of for walking instead of going on the bus?

★ What could this man be angry about?

★ Why do people give each other presents?

Reading aloud with questions R

After reading out a short passage, the child answers one to four questions that can be answered by a phrase or sentence found in the text.

Crosswords R, I, 7 or 7+

Two players have a small crossword puzzle each but the clues are separated and swapped round. Players take it in turns to ask for a clue (eg 'seven across please') which the other person reads out. Write in the answer if known. This can also be played with two teams of two people.

Note: if the clues are difficult to solve, players are instructed to say 'Pass' E

Saying 'No thank you' I, E

Put all of the pieces needed to complete two Mr Potato Heads, or two Flounder puzzles (Rockets Toys), or your names in Scrabble® letters, into a bag. Take it in turns to be in charge of the bag, reach in and offer a piece to your partner. They must say 'Yes please' or 'No thank you' and then take one for yourself. Put unwanted pieces back in the bag, give it a shake and repeat. Continue to see who gets all their pieces first. Then swap roles.

Practice at contradicting I, E

The adult describes the child, for example, You've got long hair; you like swimming, you drive a Porsche'. After each sentence the child has to agree or disagree – but one-word answers are *not* allowed! Acceptable responses are 'No, I haven't!', 'Yes, that's true', I'm too young to drive', etc.

Then the child writes down five statements about the adult and the roles are reversed. (This is a safe lead-in to asking and answering questions about each other.)

Impossible commands (practice at negating) (R), I, E

Write various commands on cards, some of which are impossible, for example:

★ Click your fingers

★ Stand on one leg

★ Lick your neck

★ Touch your elbow with your nose

★ Stand on the wall

★ Break your leg off.

Place the cards in a pile, face-down, and take it in turns to pick up one from the pile and read it out. The other person must either follow the instruction or say 'I can't', 'It's too difficult', 'That's impossible', etc. Invite the children to make up their own instructions!

Picture version

For non-readers, play this with two piles of pictures of body parts. Take it in turns to pick up a card from each pile and connect them in an instruction, for example, 'Stick your finger in your ear'; 'Put your chin on your foot'. This is good for readers too, as they now have to generate a sentence.

Answering the telephone I

The adult calls the child from an extension, home or mobile phone. The child can be given a secret message to retain until they are asked for it the next day. There may be long silences at first. It is advisable to get into the habit of remaining silent when the child picks up the phone. If nothing has been said after a while, the adult should hang up. Children soon get better at saying 'Hello' when they realise it has a purpose.

Later, it is useful to role-play conversations with the child, in preparation for phone calls to other people.

Make a request I, U

An obliging adult asks the child to get something from an adult they respond to in sentences, but do not yet speak to spontaneously, using a phrase which cannot be telescoped to one word (eg a packet of *blue* envelopes, the book *in the desk*). The child does not need to speak to the first adult but must bring the request into conversation with the second adult. If the child appears to 'hover', the second adult may assist by saying, 'Can I help?' or 'Did you need something?' but avoid anything more specific like 'What did Miss J want?'

Compare likes and dislikes (expressing opinions) E

One person goes through a list of foods, films, or activities, etc, expressing an opinion. For example, 'I love sweetcorn', 'I quite like cabbage', 'I don't mind beetroot'. After each comment, the other person immediately agrees or disagrees: 'So do I', 'I hate it', 'Me too', etc. Then swap roles and repeat.

Use pictures or written lists to begin with but, as the child gains confidence, simply choose a topic (eg school subjects, drinks, television programmes) and generate three to five comments per topic. I

Tattoo artist! I

A glitter tattoo kit provides a structured way for children to interact with friends or relatives who have been educated to use commentary-style talk rather than direct questions (see Chapter 8, page 122).

The child either approaches people to ask if they would like a tattoo or sets up a tattoo area for people to visit (eg a rug spread out in a corner of the garden). The child asks each person to choose a stencil, pick two colours and say where they want their tattoo – and goes on to delight everyone with the results!

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Quick-fire greetings E

This activity gives children practice at responding automatically to greetings and other social language expressions. The adult prompts by randomly saying 'Hello', 'Good morning', 'Thank you', 'Goodbye', 'Cheerio', 'Here you are', etc. The child replies as quickly as possible with any socially acceptable response (there will be local variations), such as 'Hi', 'All right?', 'You're welcome', 'Don't mention it', 'No worries', 'Bye', 'Thank you'. Aim to fit in as many prompt–response pairs as possible into a 30-second countdown.

Turn up the volume 

Extend the 'Turn up the volume' activity for Stage 6 by playing games, such as 'Guess Who?', 'Guess what?', 'Pot-luck questions' and 'Crosswords', sitting either back-to-back or on opposite sides of the room.

Group turn-taking 7+

Precede sentence-level activities with single-word or reading games. Use a fixed turn-taking sequence initially, then gradually move on to less structured activities. For turn-taking sequences where children talk to the person *next* to them, rather than the adult, use Stage 7 activities such as 'Colour sequences', 'Yes or No' questions, 'Pot-luck questions', 'Guess what?', the 'Yes! No! Game' and 'Instructions', plus the following.

Rote sequences 7+

Counting drills

Take it in turns to count in multiples of one, two, five or ten, saying two or three numbers of the sequence at each turn. Continue the sequence to an agreed number and then repeat in the opposite direction. Repeat with months of the year or letters of the alphabet.

All change! I

Working with rote sequences, such as numbers, months of the year or letters of the alphabet, say two or three items at each turn. Each speaker holds up their right or left hand to indicate who goes next.

Talking grid (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) I, 7+

Draw a grid on a large piece of paper. Add one row per child, a column for their names and three to four columns for personal information. For example:

Name	Who I live with	My pets	My favourite television programme	My favourite food

The children write their names in the left-hand column of the grid and, taking one topic at a time, go round the group asking for information from each child. As each child responds, the adult writes or draws their answers on the grid. The completed grid may then be used in several ways, for example:

★ Guessing game – 'This person likes pizza and has a goldfish. Who is it?'

★ Memory game – 'Who can remember Mark's favourite programme?' (Cover all squares on the grid with individual pieces of paper initially and remove them one at a time to see if the children are correct.)

★ Questions – 'Zoë, what's your favourite food? (Children take it in turns to ask each other questions. The child answering places a counter on the corresponding square. Continue until all of the squares have a counter.)

I went to market E, 7+

This classic memory game has many variations. In the original version, someone starts off saying, 'I went to market and bought a pig.' The next person says, 'I went to market and bought a pig and some toothpaste', and so on, until the sequence is too long to remember. We have also heard 'I went on holiday and packed a swimsuit …', and 'I went to a party and ate six pizzas …'. Perhaps the most enterprising version (spotted in a language unit in a secondary school) is the 'Gossip' game. Younger children may need picture prompts to stimulate their imagination, but others will enjoy the freedom to say (within reason!) what they like. For example:

★ 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car.'

★ 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car after robbing a bank …'

★ 'I heard Mrs Townley crashed her car after robbing a bank and went to prison …'

Consequences R, E, 7+

Although much of this activity is spent in silence while the children write, the resulting laughter is worth it. Participants take a blank piece of paper, write the first of the following items at the top, fold the paper over to cover their words, and pass it on to the next person. Then everyone writes the next item, folds the paper over and repeats. By the end of the game, there will be as many stories as there are participants. Finally, each participant reads out a complete story.

[Name of a man] met …	*(fold the paper over and pass it on)*
[Name of a woman].	*(fold the paper over and pass it on)*
[enter a place]. He said …	*(and so on …)*
[enter a question or comment]. She said …	
[enter reply]. Then …	
[enter what happened next]. And the consequence was …	
[draw the story to a conclusion].	*(make the final fold, and pass the paper on).*

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Pot the Lobster (Crossbow Education Ltd, age 7 to adult) **R, I, 7+**

See Stage 5 'Reading aloud' for details of this card game. When playing at Stage 7, the players call out 'Pot the lobster!' when they have a complete sentence.

Happy Families (3–6 players) 👁, I, SS, 7+

The object of the game is to collect as many families as possible (groups of four cards that belong together) by requesting individual cards. Deal out all of the cards so that every player gets an equal number of cards.* The dealer starts by asking another player for a card needed to complete a family. If the player has the card, it must be handed over. The dealer continues asking for cards until a player does not have that card.

The dealer then picks up a spare card and it is now that player's turn to request cards. They can retake the cards taken in the previous round if they still have part of that family. When a player gathers a family, they must put the four cards face-up on the table in front of them. The player who collects the most sets is the winner. This is good for using each other's names to get their attention, and for eye contact to ensure that the right person is listening before a card is requested.

*Any spare cards are placed face-down in a central pile. When a player's turn ends, they take one of the cards and this continues until all of the cards have been taken.

Fish (3–6 players) 👁, I, SS, 7+

This game is similar to the previous activity (Happy Families), the object being to collect as many groups of four cards that belong together as possible. Fish is usually played with a standard pack of playing cards but you can make your own, the object being to collect four of the same cards (matching colours, animals, vehicles, etc). Play as for Happy Families but with the following changes.

Deal five cards to each player and put the rest face down in a central pile.

Ask individuals for *all* the cards they have in a particular group, eg 'Can I have all your threes?', 'Have you got any cats?'

If the person asked does not have any of the named cards, they say 'Go fish!' The asker must then take the top card of the undealt stock. If that card is the one asked for, the asker shows it and gets another turn. If the taken card is not the one asked for, the asker keeps it, but the turn now passes to the player who said 'Go fish!'.

Give Us a Clue (Charades) 👁, I, E, U, 7+

This is a miming game in which players take it in turns to mime the title of a book, song or film while the other players call out to guess it. There are various devices for indicating the number of words or syllables in a word, rhyming words, and so on. You can also play it like Pictionary™ (stage 6) and *draw* the clues.

Reading will be required to know what title to mime or draw, unless it is whispered by an adult.

Stage 8 Using connected sentences in conversation

All of the group games can initially be practised one-to-one.

Storytelling I, E, SS

Use a prompt such as Rory's Story Cubes® (available from www.storycubes.com). Roll the dice and make up a story connecting all nine images. Choose from themes such as 'Batman' or 'Doctor Who', or the original set for general storytelling.

Floor plan I, E, SS

Show children the convention for marking doors on a floor plan. One person describes the ground floor of their house as if they are entering through their front door and walking from room to room (they might like to draw a floor plan first). The other person listens and creates a matching (they hope!) floor plan, interjecting to seek clarification or ask for repetition as necessary. Swap roles. This can be repeated for upstairs or the garden.

Twenty Questions I, E, SS

Each player can ask up to 20 questions to identify a hidden word or picture – the other person can only answer 'Yes' or 'No'. The choice can be as wide as you like by making the introductory question, 'Animal, vegetable or mineral?', or narrow the choice down to a category such as 'Famous people', 'Television and films', 'Natural world', etc.

Teach me I, SS

Version 1

The adult and the child play a game in which the adult has 'forgotten' how to do a simple task such as brush their teeth or make a sandwich. The child must give them step-by-step instructions to make them carry out the activity correctly. For best effect, the adult should deliberately make mistakes by following instructions literally.

Version 2

The child teaches the adult something new, eg how to play a game, set up an online account or use an app.

Talking Grid (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) I, 8+

Extend the Stage 7 activity by asking each child to relay their information to the group. For example, 'My name is Mark. I live with my Mum and Dad and baby sister Kirsty. I haven't got any pets. My favourite TV programme is *Dr Who* and I love spicy bean burgers.' The other children are invited to ask questions, for example 'How old is Kirsty?'

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Walking Robot (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) **I, SS**

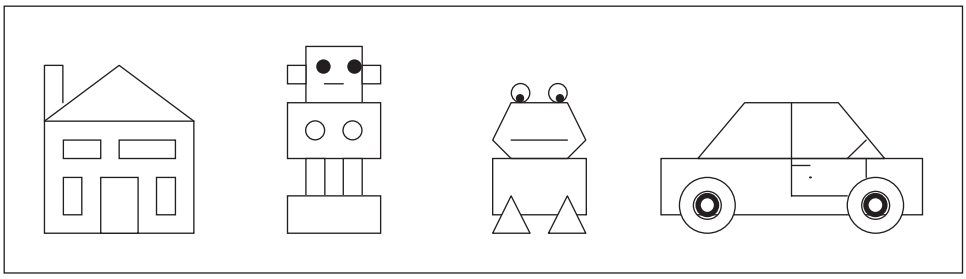
The child hides an object and you become a robot who needs precise instructions to find it. Put on a blindfold or simply shut your eyes, sit down … and wait! You can prompt if necessary with 'I can't move until you tell me to'.

When told to move or walk, step your legs up and down until told to stand up. When eventually walking, continue to walk until you are told to stop … even if this means bumping into furniture or the wall!

If the child doesn't know their left from right, they can tell you to turn slowly until you are facing the right way and then command you (the robot) to stop. When they say, 'It's in front of you', reach out and grab at the air until you are given precise directions to move forward, reach lower down, etc. You may need to take crafty peeks to avoid accidents!

Drawing Robot (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) **I, SS**

Draw a large but very simple line drawing *in pencil* on a sheet of A4-sized paper. This can be a house, robot, frog or car, for example:



Place a marker pen next to the drawing and tell the child you are a robot who needs instructions to draw the picture. They must tell you exactly what to do and you will do exactly what they say. Put on a blindfold or simply shut your eyes … and wait! Prompt the child if necessary with 'I can't move until you tell me to pick up the pen'. When told to pick it up, make open and shut movements with your hand until told to move your hand forwards to where the pen is placed.

When you eventually pick up the pen, continue to lift it up in the air, high above your head until the child tells you to stop … and to bring it back down again. Don't take the top off the pen until instructed, and so on, until the picture is completed. You will get some surprisingly good results and have a lot of fun!

Seeking clarification (from *Active Listening for Active Learning*, QEd Publications) **I, SS**

Read out a series of instructions that are deliberately complicated or ambiguous and warn the child that they will need to ask you questions to be sure about what to do. The following example is reproduced with permission from QEd Publications.

1 Take a piece of paper and place it in the portrait position on the table, in front of you.

2 Draw an inverted triangle at the bottom of the page. (The child will need to ask for a pen or pencil.)

3 Draw another inverted triangle next to it. Make it the same size.

4 Draw an upright oval above the left triangle.

5 Draw an identical item above the triangle on the right.

6 Draw a line horizontally across each oval.

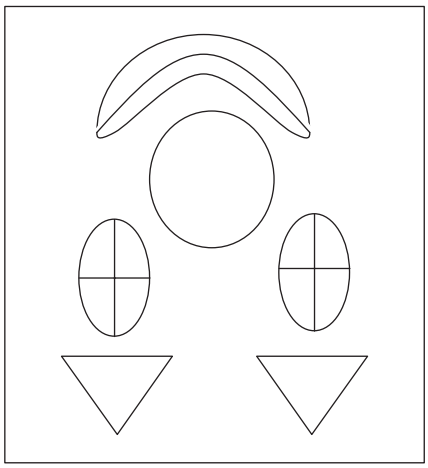
7 Draw a line vertically through the middle of each oval.

8 Draw a larger circle in the middle of the page, above the ovals.

9 Draw an inverted banana-shape above the big circle.

10 Draw a line down the length of the banana.

11 Ask the child 'Can you guess what you have drawn?' If they have no idea, suggest they turn the page upside-down!



Note: see *Active Listening for Active Learning* (2009) for more individual and group games to develop questioning, directing and seeking clarification.

Stare out contest!

This is a non-verbal activity but we do not introduce it until Stage 8. We prefer to allow individuals to develop eye contact naturally while they relax during turn-taking and talking activities, and only introduce this activity when there are difficulties establishing eye-contact.

Set a challenge to maintain eye contact for 30 seconds without looking away – blinking and laughing *are* allowed! The first 10 seconds often feel intensely uncomfortable for both parties but, suddenly, something lifts and it becomes surprisingly easy. Once the individual can make eye contact, apply the rules in Chapter 10 (page 214) to activities in Stages 6, 7 and 8, as appropriate.

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Hedbanz (What Am I?) (Paul Lamond Games, age 7 to adult) **I, SS, 8+**

Each player wears a headband which holds a picture that only the other player(s) can see. Taking it in turns, the players then have a minute each to ask as many questions as they can to identify their picture. Make your own version using stretch cotton headbands and pictures for 'Who Am I? and 'Where Am I?' in addition to 'What Am I?'.

Don't Say It (Paul Lamond Games, age 6 to adult) **R, I, U, 8+**

Can you get your partner or team to say 'pig'? It's not as easy as it sounds, when you can't say the words on the card – in this case, 'sausage', 'sty' or 'pork'. Players need to be quick to avoid running out of time. The game contains 200 words at four different levels of difficulty, depending on the age and abilities of the players.

This game re-creates many elements of conversation – creativity, spontaneity, interjection, clarification – while retaining the comfort of a familiar structure.

Who's Who (Ginger Fox, age teen to adult) **R, I, E, U, 8+**

This game is similar to 'Don't Say It'. The players describe famous names for their partner or team in a series of one-minute rounds, without giving any rhyming clues or saying the name on the card.

Sussed!® All sorts (Games to Get Ltd, age 8 to adult) **R, I, E, U, 8+**

The players 'suss out' each other's likes and dislikes. Each player draws a card containing questions with three possible answers, which they read out. They choose the answer they consider to be true and write it down. The rest of the players win points if they write down the same answer. Players may challenge the reader's answer and the reader may change their mind as a result. This leads to amended points so it is in players' interests to dispute answers and argue their case!

Sussed!® Emotional Intelligence
(Games to Get Ltd, age 10 to adult) **R, I, E, U, 8+**

This is played in the same way as the previous game but focuses on the players' personality traits, emotions and reactions to different situations.