

## Increase choices, reduce questions

When children are finding talking difficult, they can feel anxious and hesitant about being asked questions, which can then cause a resistance to communicate.

Questions like; 'what's that?' 'what colour is it?' or 'where are we going?' increase the pressure that children feel in these situations leading them to get angry and frustrated. The best way to get a response is to say the word yourself, and maybe when your child is ready, they will say it by themselves.

### What do I need to do?

- **Offer a choice** – by doing so, you give the child the power to decide without needing words. They can just point, reach or make a sound, and then might say the word when they are ready. E.g. do you want milk or water?
- **Reduce the number of questions** and make more comments – By giving them the words, their confidence will grow and they will begin to feel comfortable initiating conversation. E.g. 'milk. There's your milk'.
- **Increase wait time** – provide enough time/space in the conversation for your child to respond. Sometimes children can need up to **10 seconds to process** something said to them.



### ★ Top Tip...

If I want to tell you something or ask a question, I might feel under pressure and get frustrated that I don't have the words.

**Try saying 'Show me', or 'You get it!'**

For further ideas check out the videos below.



[www.gov.wales/talkwithme](http://www.gov.wales/talkwithme)

### How?

By offering choices



'Juice or milk?'

By reducing the number of questions – make a comment instead

'Milk! Let's drink milk!'

### Putting it into practise

- **Choices** – Begin by holding up the 2 objects on offer so the child has a visual clue. **Apple or orange? Shoes or wellies? Red or green? (Make sure you label each object).** Accept any attempt to make a choice (e.g. pointing/ looking), even if they don't say the word this time.
- **Enjoy** what they try to say – showing enjoyment rewards their communication, and makes your child want to do it more!
- Before using 'what?', 'where?' and 'who?' stop and think... Does my child have the words to answer this? Will it help them to join in the conversation? **Am I just testing them?** Just name the objects instead.