



Talking Tips

Dealing with 'I don't know'

The quiet child:

Always consider if a question is the best way to start the conversation. For many children, making a comment about what they are doing/looking at and waiting to see how they respond is more effective in starting a conversation than asking questions.

The chatty child:

'I don't know' could mean the open question you asked is too challenging for them. Give the child plenty of time to respond. Model an appropriate answer for them to support their understanding and expressive language

e.g.

Adult: 'How do you think he's going to escape?'

Child: No response or 'I don't know'

Adult: 'He could climb up the ladder!'

Conversations about what the child is doing or looking at right now can help. The child is more likely to respond as you are more likely to be following their train of thought.

Conversations about things that have happened elsewhere or will happen later are more difficult to understand. **Support conversations wherever possible with visual cues.**

2011 is the National Year of Communication for more information visit www.hello.org.uk

May 2011: Partnership with Parents
Adults are the best resource – adult:child interaction supports speech, language and communication development

