**Conversational Styles of Children **

**The sociable child:**  the sociable child initiates interactions constantly and is very responsive to others initiations. Even in early infancy, sociable children initiate interactions to draw attention to themselves. **Some** sociable children interact freely in any situation, but others are more sociable with their peers than they are with their teachers, or vice versa. If language is delayed, the sociable child may be slow to talk or difficult to understand, but this does not deter them from interacting with others. However, they may be less socially mature than their peers.

**The reluctant child:** The reluctant child seldom initiates and is often outside the group activities and interactions. They may take a long time to ‘warm up’ and respond to you when you approach them. Given time and opportunities, they will interact with you and other teachers, but peer interactions may be difficult for them. If language is delayed, this child reluctance to initiate may be related to his language difficulty. They may be reluctant to interact with others because they can’t make themselves understood or may not yet have learned to communicate appropriately in social situations. However, a reluctant child usually responds when others make an effort to interact with them.

**The child with their own agenda:**  This child spends a lot of time playing on their own, appearing uninterested in interactions with adults and peers. They may initiate when they need something, but they frequently reject or ignore efforts to engage. Typically developing children may go through this independent phase when they want to ‘do their own thing’. However, they still enjoy interacting with others in some social situations.

**The passive child:** this child seldom responds or initiates, demonstrating little interest in the objects or people around them. It can be very hard to elicit a smile from them or to engage them in any sort of playful interaction. If this is the child's consistent style of interaction, it reflects a developmental delay.

NOTE – a child may have language delay and display any one of these conversational styles

**The Role of the Practitioner**

* **The director:** tight control, making suggestions, giving directions… children respond as directed. Can limit spontaneity,
* **The entertainer:** Does most of talking and playing! Little opportunity for children to get actively involved.
* **The responsive partner:** tuned in to children’s abilities, needs and interests. Responds with warmth and interest to each child, which encourages them to take an active part in interactions, both with her and with their peers.
* **The timekeeper**: Rushes through activities and routines to stay on schedule. Results in very limited interactions.
* **The too-quiet teacher:**  Hardly interacts, even when children initiate. Often happens when children have their own agenda.
* **The helper**: Talks for child or offers help before child asks. Child learns not to expect too much of himself.
* **The cheerleader:** gives lots of praise and gets very excited when child accomplishes a task. Sometimes overuses praise! Praise can end the conversation.