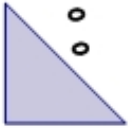


SELECTIVE MUTISM

San Ramon Valley Unified School District
699 Old Orchard Drive
Danville, CA 94526
925-552-5500
<http://www.srvusd.net>



Description

Selective Mutism is a childhood anxiety disorder characterized by a child's inability to speak in select social settings, such as school. Children understand language and are able to talk normally in settings where they are comfortable and secure. Selective Mutism may also occur with social phobia or social anxiety. Children with Selective Mutism have an actual fear of speaking when there is an expectation of speaking. This disorder is sometimes mistaken as Autism or shyness. This can be quite heart wrenching to watch, and is often very debilitating for the child as well as frustrating for parents and teachers.



Characteristics

Fear of speaking in some social situations, like the classroom

May appear calm but non-responsive

May be unable to communicate nonverbally

May stand motionless with fear when confronted with specific social pressures

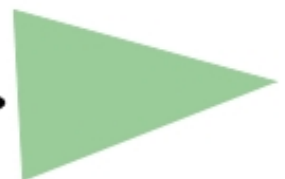
May be unable to make eye contact

May appear nervous or "fidgety"

Can speak normally in at least one setting, usually home

May report feeling nausea, or may experience vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and an array of other physical symptoms before school or social outings

Might speak to a few "select" peers





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We're on the Web!
 See us at:
www.SRVUSD.NET

Classroom Implications

Student/child will be anxious about speaking in normal classroom situations

Lack of oral response will be difficult in assessing student progress

Severe behavioral inhibition and inability to speak

Social relationships can be very difficult

Facial expressions and body language obviously displays fear or nervousness

Student may communicate with peers but not aloud with adults

Student may have falsely low test scores that leads to misinterpretation of the child's cognitive abilities

Tips for Teachers

Be patient. Be mindful that a whole other child exists other than the student that will not speak

Realize the symptoms of selective mutism are not intentional and don't take it personally

Do not try to force the child to speak, but encourage and reinforce speaking when it occurs

Consult with school psychologist and speech/language therapist to offer support of the child

Provide routine and structure in the classroom setting

Assessment of child's progress may be difficult especially in reading. Ask parents to tape the child reading

Allow the child to observe oral presentations before providing an opportunity for him to participate. Do not insist if the child chooses not to participate

Work in coordination with parents to develop ways of encouraging child to communicate

Resources

_ HYPERLINK "<http://www.selectivemutism.org/FAQ.htm>"

_ HYPERLINK "<http://www.homeroomteacher.com/>"

_ HYPERLINK "<http://www.selectivemutism.org/smg/teach.htm>"

Disclaimer : _
 This information has been compiled by teachers in the SRVUSD to promote understanding of and ability to work with students in an educational setting. It is not designed for medical purposes, clinical diagnosis, or determining special education eligibility. All students are different. This information is not intended to be complete or necessarily applicable to every student identified with this condition. Additional information, strategies or theories may exist, and may conflict with information herein.