

Parent Talk

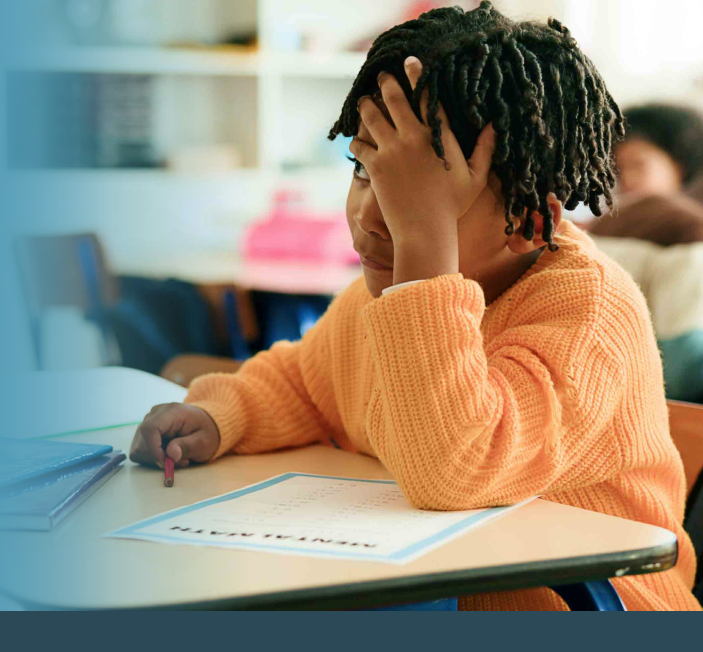
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How To Recognize Selective Mutism

Many caregivers may have heard the term “selective mutism” and either not known what it is or have suspected their child may have it but weren’t sure what some of the signs are. Below, we provide an overview of some common selective mutism warning signs and what makes it different than normal feelings of shyness or anxiety.

What Is Selective Mutism?

Selective mutism is a condition where a child cannot speak in certain social situations (such as school) despite being able to communicate in other settings (like at home). These behaviors typically last at least one month and can have profound impacts on educational and social development. Many children with selective mutism display other symptoms of anxiety such as sleep issues and excessive worries.



It Goes Beyond Just Being Shy

While many children experience shyness, selective mutism goes beyond this. Kids with selective mutism tend to freeze up or give a blank facial expression when expected to speak outside of the home. In cases of shyness, most kids can at least whisper or communicate in some other way, whereas kids with selective mutism cannot and will actively avoid groups and even be unable to ask for help when needed.

It Comes With Physical Symptoms

Many kids with selective mutism also experience physical symptoms such as stomachaches, shortness of breath, and dizziness and/or lightheadedness. Kids will often be able to communicate they are feeling unwell at home to avoid going to school and being faced with social situations.



There’s Avoidance

Kids with selective mutism will avoid social situations such as school or social gatherings with peers. It can progress to a point where kids are actively refusing to go to school each day or cancelling previously made plans to participate in a social gathering like a birthday party. This can have very significant impacts on the child’s social development and can cause disruptions in their education.

If you suspect your child may have selective mutism, don’t worry alone! Contact us today to schedule a free phone screen to discuss your concerns and start your treatment journey.

[Get Started](#)

Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away



Therapy & Treatment Services

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →



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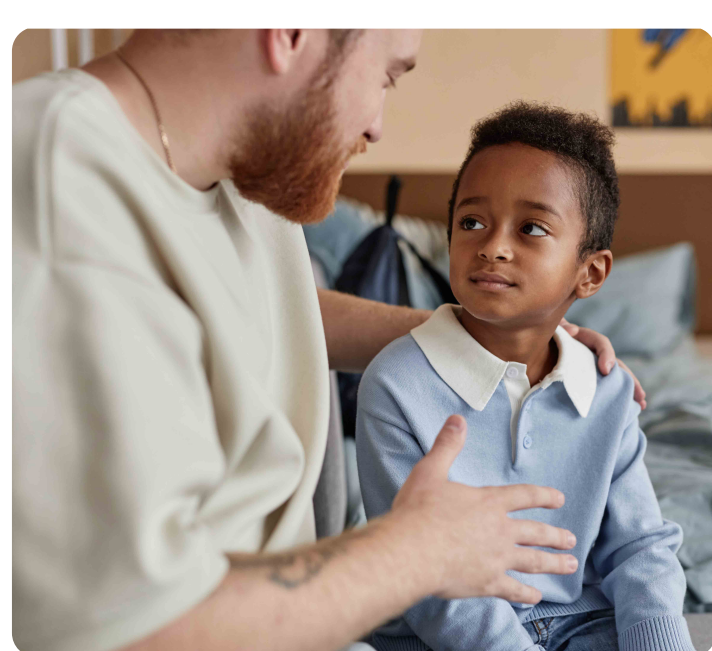
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Featured Resources



Selective Mutism: Diagnosis & Effective Treatments

In this seminar, we’ll discuss how to recognize the symptoms of selective mutism, the impact selective mutism can have on kids and adolescents, and effective treatment approaches. We’ll identify skills that you can use at home to help your child engage in Brave Talk!

[LEARN MORE](#)



How To Recognize Selective Mutism

Shyness at a young age is often considered developmentally appropriate and can be normal for many kids. However, there’s a point when shyness can start to interfere with a child’s ability to engage with peers, teachers, and other fun, recreational activities. Selective mutism is an anxiety disorder that makes it difficult for a child to speak with others in specific settings.

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How to Treat Selective Mutism: Best Practices and Effective Treatments

Kids with selective mutism are most often diagnosed between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. Identifying selective mutism and intervening at an early age provides the child with more opportunities for successful treatment and it can help them avoid a long and challenging future of potential academic, social, and emotional repercussions.

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Client Spotlight: An Effective Selective Mutism Treatment Experience

This is a real interview with a parent whose child engaged with evidence-based outpatient services for selective mutism at the Center for Effective Therapy. They graduated from treatment a year ago and are now reflecting on the impact that the Baker Center had on their lives.

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