

## Selective Mutism and Social Anxiety Disorder

### Does your child....

- Speak normally at home, but is silent at school/work or in other locations in their community
- “Freeze” or otherwise appear “stuck” in front of others
- Display a flat or frightened emotional expression when around others but later say they were enjoying themselves
- Get described often as “shy” or “timid”
- Use nonverbal behaviors to communicate (e.g. nodding their head, pointing, grunting)
- Speak to others only under specific circumstances. For example: to those who are younger than them but not older (or only 1:1, or only at home, etc)
- Identify notable fear or worry about being embarrassed in social situations
- Avoid situations, people, and places where they may have to talk to or interact with others

These symptoms, among others, may indicate the presence of an anxiety disorder. If this sounds like your child it may be helpful to get an evaluation for **Selective Mutism (SM)** or **Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)**. SM is commonly diagnosed before a child is 5-years-old as this is the first time many children are in school; however teenagers and adults can also suffer from this form of anxiety. SAD is commonly first diagnosed when a child is between the ages of 8- and 15-years-old. Left untreated, it is associated with other problems throughout the lifespan including depression, bullying and interpersonal difficulties, additional anxiety, and other issues.

*At The Genesis Therapy Center we believe in a holistic approach to patient care – healing and growth taking place through body, mind and spirit. Genesis is founded on the principle of commitment to affordable, accessible, skilled and respectful service to all. In that spirit, please freely disseminate this resource to all that might benefit from its content.*



Helpful SM Online Resources:

<http://www.genesistherapy.org/>  
[www.selectivemutismnetwork.org/](http://www.selectivemutismnetwork.org/)  
<http://childmind.org/guide/selective-mutism/>  
[www.selectivemutism.org/](http://www.selectivemutism.org/)  
<http://www.selectivemutismcenter.org/>  
<http://www.selectivemutismfoundation.org/>  
<http://anxietynetwork.com/content/selective-mutism>

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Oak Lawn, IL  
5210 W. 95<sup>th</sup> St

LaGrange, IL  
14 W. Burlington Ave

Oak Park, IL  
1010 Lake Street

Schaumburg, IL  
930 W. Higgins Rd

Oak Brook, IL  
2625 Butterfield Road

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