

USEFUL TIPS FOR PARENTS

DO's and DON'T'S WHEN HELPING THE SELECTIVELY MUTE CHILD

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<u>DO</u>	<u>DON'T</u>
1. Listen	1. Ask, "Did you talk today?"
2. Encourage	2. Criticize the child for not talking
3. Parents should form a united team and work together to help the child	3. Put added pressure on the child by demanding speech or trying to trick him or her into speech
4. Parents should privately discuss the SM behaviors and create a plan they can both agree to	4. Forget to give as much attention and time to the other children in the household
5. Educate others; this is not "stubbornness" or willful behavior on the part of the child, as is commonly believed	5. Foster dependence. Instead, find ways to help him or her communicate with others nonverbally
6. Reward communicative behavior (nodding, note writing, waving, etc.), not speech	6. Discuss the child and his or her problems in front of the child or the other children in the family
7. Build upon the child's existing strengths (singing, use of funny voices, reading, etc.)	7. Praise in public; this attention makes the child feel more self-conscious
8. Know how and where the child communicates	
9. Help the child build friendships one at a time	
10. When ready, introduce the use of audio and video taping	