

Situational mutism



What is it?

Situational mutism, sometimes termed selective mutism, means being completely quiet and unmoving during certain social situations, such as in school, but not in others

What causes it?

It's caused by extreme anxiety and sets in after toddlerhood. It tends to show up after children are compelled to interact with people outside their close family circle, for example, when they start going to nursery.

How is it identified?

In addition to muteness, it's characterized by having a frozen, rigid facial expression and tense posture.

Are situationally mute kids always silent?

Situational muteness varies in intensity. A child might be able to talk in front of their class, but not one on one to individual classmates

Can it be cured?

Speech and language expert, Libby Hill, who specializes in situational muteness and PDA, recommends letting situationally mute children develop at their own paces, and in their ways, without pressuring them to talk more

