

Apraxia/Mute

FACTS:

- **Mutism is a lack of speech in children**
- **It can be due to hearing loss, mouth or tongue deformities, difficulty forming sounds or extreme stress as a result of trauma or anxiety.**
- **A child who does not speak or make sounds should have his or her hearing tested.**
- **The child should be checked to make sure he or she understands what is being said.**
- **Most children have normal intelligence and can learn; they just might not be able to speak.**
- **Children with normal intelligence may be unable to speak because of extreme stress or anxiety about their life situation. They may begin to speak after becoming comfortable and at ease in their surroundings.**



Some children do not speak due to stress in their lives.



Other children may have hearing loss or a tongue deformity.





TREATMENT:

- Have the child assessed by a doctor for problems with hearing or deformities of the mouth or tongue.
- Use pictures to help the child communicate. For example, make a picture board with drawings for every day needs, such as food, drink, bedtime, potty, etc.
- Encourage the child to watch as the caregiver forms the mouth, tongue and lips to make sounds.
- Check for "tongue tie," which is when the stringy piece of tissue that connects the tongue to the bottom of the mouth is too tight to move the tongue to form words.
- Make sure the child can move his or her tongue from side to side and around the mouth. Can they lick their lips? Sweets may be used on the lips to test this.
- Teach the child to write.



Use pictures to allow the child to express when they have to eat, go potty, etc.



Most of these children have normal intelligence.