

DIRFloortime™ Strategies to Remediate Selective Mutism

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(Adapted from the ASTRA Foundation and the works of Drs. Stanley Greenspan & Serena Wieder)

FEDC 1: Shared Attention and Regulation (Child with SM is non-responsive)

Challenges at this level: When child is not regulated and attention is not shared, the child may be distracted, preoccupied, and/or lethargic and passive

Goals:

- Child will sustain shared attention to the special adults in sensorimotor interactive play using the child's preferred measurable sensory and motor modalities such as movement looking, touching, or listening
- Child will regulate his sensory system in order to sustain shared attention with support
- Child will regulate his sensory system in order to sustain shared attention independently
- Child will increase attention by increasing interactive circles of gestural communication resulting in a continuous flow of interactions between child and adult
- Child will sustain shared attention with a peer in interaction
- Child will sustain shared attention in a group
- Child will sustain shared attention independently across contexts

Activities:

- Improve engagement and social comfort
- Use a small environment
- 1:1 ratio
- Not a lot of stimuli or distractions
- Any type of turn-taking activities are great (board games)
- Sensorimotor Activities (swinging, bouncing, jumping etc.)

FEDC 2: Engaging and Relating (Child with SM may gesture, but is still silent)

Challenges at this level: When relationships and engagement are weak, (e.g. absence of trusting, positive expectations) avoidance, distrust, or apathy may take their place

Goals:

- Child will form relationships with special adults through pleasurable and enjoyable interactions
- Child will sustain engagement in reciprocal social interactions special adults that bring pleasure and joy
- Child will sustain engagement in reciprocal social interactions when annoyed and protesting
- Child will increase sustained engagement by increasing the circles of communication
- Child will increase sustained engagement for a wider range of emotions such as jealousy or fear
- Child will sustain engagement with the year with adult mediation
- Child will sustain engagement within the interactions

Activities:

- Puzzles, Arts and crafts, Stamping and stencils, Eye Spy books
- Guessing games to practice nodding or shaking the head (Hide something in the room "Is it in the drawer"?)
- More sensorimotor activities!

FEDC 3: Two-way Intentional Communication (Child with SM may begin making sounds)

Challenges at this level: When a child has poor two-way communication they struggle with language and learning where conversations and exchanging information are necessary

Goals:

- Child will interact in a back-and-forth rhythm and animated exchanges using facial expressions, gestures, and sounds
- Child will initiate purposeful interactions around desires (open circles) and will close circles following adults response to her initiative
- Child will increase number of purposeful interactions around desires for sensorimotor activities to go somewhere, to obtain objects, or in response to adult strategies to expand the number of circles
- Child will increase number of purposeful interactions using imitation
- Child will increase number of purposeful interactions using simple gestures, such as reach, taking, pulling, or pointing
- Child will increase number of purposeful interactions across widening range of emotions, such as dependency, assertiveness, and jealousy
- Child will increase purposeful interactions in various processing areas, including visual-spatial, motor planning, perceptual motor, auditory processing, and language
- Child will sustain purposeful interactions with a peer with adult mediation
- Child will sustain purposeful interactions with a peer spontaneously
- Child will sustain purposeful interactions within groups

Activities:

- Systematic Sound Sequencing Strategy:
 - Use the body, then use the mouth to make noise (Phonemes, Sound Segmentation, Blending if needed), interviewing games
- Sensorimotor activities

FEDC 4: Purposeful Problem-Solving Communication (Child with SM is more verbal)

Challenges at this level: When a child has challenges with purposeful problem-solving, she struggles with sequencing a motor plan, organization, and solving problems

Goals:

- Child will express communicative intent through gestures or words to get what he wants
- Child will sequence (motor plan) in order to execute an idea, such as the desire for a cookie, to pull a chair over to the cabinet, climb up, open the cabinet, open the container, get the cookies and then smile
- Child will verbalize solutions to complex problems

Activities:

- Obstacle courses
- Playful obstruction / sabotage (e.g. child wants to swing, but a swing is not available)