From a parent's perspective:

About My Child

My son when he is relaxed, comfortable and talkative

My son when he's anxious and mute

My son, Reid, is an energetic boy with a great sense of humor. He loves playing video games and basketball with his friends. But when he is at school, parties, or meets someone new, he gets nervous and cannot talk. Reid suffers from the childhood anxiety disorder, **Selective Mutism,** where he can talk and interact when comfortable, such as at home, but becomes anxious and mute in social settings where he senses an expectation for speech and communication, such as at school.

Below are some recommendations on the best way to interact with my son:

- When you see Reid, do not go running up to him and try to make him speak.
- Avoid initial attention on Reid. Say hello and acknowledge others in the room first!
- Avoid direct eye contact in the beginning. Have a 'no-big-deal' approach!
- Get down on his level and try to identify with his likes.
- Joke and have fun, but apply no pressure to speak...
- Never try to BE THE ONE who tries to get Reid to speak...IT DOES NOT WORK.
- Ask Direct, Choice, YES/NO questions rather than OPEN-ENDED 'thought provoking' questions.
- If Reid does not initially respond to you, please give him time. He is not ignoring you, but may feel nervous. You can ask again or reword a question to him.
- Spend time doing other activities, such as focusing on a prop (toy, photo album, book, etc.) rather than STARING at each other.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and getting to know my son! Reid is working hard to overcome his Selective Mutism. He may need time to respond to you, but with your patience, he will begin to point, nod or perhaps write a response to you. Then, he will begin to use me, his father, sister or friend as a whisper buddy to help him to get used to hearing his voice around you. With time and effort, he may read to you from a script and eventually not only respond to you, but ask you questions.

Thank you so much for your understanding and patience! To learn more about Selective Mutism go to: www.selectivemutismcenter.org

BRIDGE TO COMMUNICATION
SMart Center
Selective Mutism Anxiety & Related Disorders Treatment Center

About My Child with Selective Mutism is used in conjunction with Social Communication Anxiety Treatment (S-CAT®)
Dr. Elisa Shipon-Blum and Selective Mutism Anxiety Research & Treatment Center (SMart Center)
www.selectivemutismcenter.org | 215-887-5748 | smartcenter@selectivemutismcenter.org
505 North Old York Road | Lower Level | Jenkintown, PA 19046