



## ***Down syndrome Children Talking Out Loud To Themselves***

Glenn SM, Cunningham CC  
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School of Health and Human Sciences, John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

### **Abstract:**

Despite parental concerns about young people with Down syndrome talking out loud to themselves (using private speech), there is virtually no research literature on this behavior. In that which exists, investigators have largely interpreted the behavior within a pathological framework. An alternative perspective is that self-talk is developmentally appropriate for these young people. Parents of 78 young people with Down syndrome, age 17 to 24 years, were asked whether their offspring had ever used private speech. Results confirm the universality of private speech and its developmental pattern. No association was found between private speech and behavior problems, communication difficulties, or social isolation. Talking out loud to self by young people with Down syndrome should be seen as adaptive, and not an indication of pathology.

### **My comments:**

In this study of 78 young people with DS, fully 91% of the group had some private speech, or "self-talk." Private speech fell into the following categories: talking to objects, self-dialog, self-direction, description of own activity, and muttering. The authors did not find any clear developmental pattern of self-talk that might parallel development of typical young children. Drs Chicoine, McGuire and Greenbaum of the Adult DS Center in Chicago have also looked at this habit, and found 81% of their adults showed some degree of private speech. For a more in-depth look into this subject, you can read their article from the Disability Solutions magazine vol. 2, issue 2, at [www.disabilitysolutions.org/pdf/2-2.pdf](http://www.disabilitysolutions.org/pdf/2-2.pdf). (This requires Acrobat Reader to read this file. If you don't have Acrobat Reader, go to [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html) first to get the free program.)