

Don't call 12-year-old Mexican university student 'genius'

August 4 2018, by Joebill Munoz



12-year-old Carlos Santamaria Diaz poses for photographers during a press event at Mexico's National Autonomous University in Mexico City, Friday, Aug. 3, 2018. The university, better known by its Spanish initials as the UNAM, said Thursday that Carlos Santamaria Diaz is the youngest such student in the university's roughly century-long history. (AP Photo / Marco Ugarte)

The youngest student ever admitted to Mexico's National Autonomous University wouldn't call himself a "genius."

Carlos Santamaria Diaz, a 12-year-old who will begin classes for an undergraduate degree in biomedical physics Monday, was dwarfed by the upholstered blue chair he sat in to answer reporters' questions Friday.

With his feet barely brushing the floor, he laughed out loud and shook his head when a reporter asked if he considered himself a genius.

"I don't like to use that word," he said.

Carlos passed the university's entrance exam and has already done preparatory work at the university's school of chemistry in its genetics sciences center.

The boy from western Guadalajara grew bored with [public school](#) at an early age and turned to the web where he taught himself calculus and physics. By the age of nine, he participated in university programs in analytical chemistry, biochemistry and biology.

Nervously running his hands through his hair and speaking passionately of finding cures for rare diseases, his behavior seemed typical of a confident albeit young college student until the university's photographer asked him to pose with a stuffed mascot and the boy emerged.



12-year-old Carlos Santamaria Diaz smiles as he stands with his parents during a press conference at Mexico's National Autonomous University in Mexico City, Friday, Aug. 3, 2018. The university, better known by its Spanish initials as the UNAM, said Thursday that Carlos Santamaria Diaz is the youngest such student in the university's roughly century-long history. (AP Photo / Marco Ugarte)

When asked if he ever felt isolated because of his intelligence, Carlos shrugged off the question: "The truth is, no, I feel like the university has been very good to me, especially the chemistry faculty."

His mother Arcelia Diaz said that like any mom she was proud of her son.

Carlos offered advice to Mexico's President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador: "First off, I would tell him not to make the same mistakes as the previous presidents."

Politicians should "take care of the country like they take care of themselves," he said. "This a country filled with people who have dreams and at the same don't have any dreams because they don't have any opportunities."

The university said Carlos would be treated like any other student, with no special privileges or benefits.



12-year-old Carlos Santamaria Diaz shares a moment with his father Fabian Santamaria during during a press conference at Mexico's National Autonomous University in Mexico City, Friday, Aug. 3, 2018. The university, better known by its Spanish initials as the UNAM, said Thursday that Carlos Santamaria Diaz is the youngest such student in the university's roughly century-long history.(AP Photo/Marco Ugarte)



12-year-old Carlos Santamaria Diaz is seen on a television camera monitor during a press conference at Mexico's National Autonomous University in Mexico City, Friday, Aug. 3, 2018. The university, better known by its Spanish initials as the UNAM, said Thursday that Carlos Santamaria Diaz is the youngest such student in the university's roughly century-long history. (AP Photo / Marco Ugarte)



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In this undated photo provided by the Sala de Prensa UNAM, Carlos Santamaria Diaz sits with his parents, Arcelia Diaz and Fabian Santamaria, during an interview in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Mexico's National Autonomous University, better known by its initials UNAM, says it has admitted the 12-year-old student to its undergraduate degree program in biomedical physics. (Sala de Prensa UNAM photo via AP)

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