

School Avoidance: Helping Your Child

We recommend that your family follow these ideas to help your child return to school.

Plan & follow a routine.

- Create routines for the morning, afternoon, and evening.
- Include times for meals, homework, and bed time.
- Use written or picture schedules as needed.
- Practice all routines as calm habits.



Prepare items the night before.

- Pack backpacks with homework and school papers (like permission slips).
- Pack lunch if needed.
- Place coat and backpack near door.

Plan shower/bath time as part of the evening routine to save time in the morning.

- Lay out tomorrow's clothes near bed.

Wake up earlier to have extra time.

- Plan 10-minute goals for hygiene, dressing, breakfast, and final leaving.
- Notice how your child usually stalls, then solve those problems to avoid future delay.
- Remain calm if your child tries to move slowly.
- Act like everyone will leave on time.

Give simple directions without explanation.

- Keep conversation to a minimum.
- Speak calmly in a neutral tone of voice.
- If your child tries to argue, repeat your expectation in a calm voice.
- Do not criticize, lecture, or explain.



Ignore complaints about headaches or stomachaches.

- Remember that anxiety can cause a child to feel sick.
- Do not get upset if your child throws up. Keep planning to go to school.
- Tell your child that people can throw up when they are worried or upset.
- Remind your child that he/she has coping skills for being at school.
- Stay calm and expect your child to be ready on time.



- **Keep your child home for a rash or fever above 101°.**
 - If your child stays home for illness, do not give extra attention.
 - Have your child stay in bed all day without TV, electronics, games, snacks, etc. , ,
 - Let schoolwork (from bed) be the only activity of the day.
 - Do not give rewards for staying home (no TV, electronic time, games, snacks, etc.).
 - Remember that you are helping your child learn about school responsibilities.
 - Let your child earn privileges for going to school (family time, favorite activity, electronic time, etc.).
 - Take your child to the doctor if he/she misses school.
 - The doctor will help you know if your child is truly sick.
 - Your child will learn that you are serious about solving this problem.

- **Call your school team, resource officer, or local police if you need more help.**
 - Your child will learn that you expect him/her to go to school.