



Did you know?

Research shows that in Australia, higher student attendance at school is associated, on average, with higher student achievement

attendance+ MATTERS

Further assistance? Sometimes, all of these things do not work and you may need assistance from professionals who can help anxious children. Discuss your concerns with your child's class teacher or the Stage Assistant Principal to resolve any school-based issues. If your child requires additional support, the school's counsellor may assist with anxiety support for your child (in an age-appropriate way) or with a referral to professional support. Alternatively, you can manage your concerns regarding your child's anxiety with your doctor, who can assist you with a referral to a mental health professional such as a psychologist. These professionals help children overcome their anxiety by using methods such as relaxation, improving self-esteem, improving confidence and changing the way they think about difficult situations.



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What to do when your child doesn't want to go to school !



Strategies for Parents & Carers



What should I do if my child won't

go to school? You should contact the school as soon as possible for advice and support.

Having problems getting your child to school for some of these reasons?

- won't get out of bed in the morning
- won't go to bed at night
- can't find their uniform, books, school bag
- slow to eat breakfast
- haven't done their homework
- watching TV or playing video games
- have a test or assignment due
- it's their birthday

A set routine can help!

- set a time to go to bed
- set a time to get out of bed
- have uniform and bag ready the night before
- eat breakfast at the same time each day
- set a time for homework
- speak about school positively
- be firm and seek support if needed

Why are some children anxious about going to school?

Anxiety may affect children at any age. The causes of anxiety may be different for young children than for teenagers:

Separation anxiety – being afraid to be away from parents.

Problems at school such as:

- no friends, not fitting in, friendship conflicts
- feeling 'lost' at school
- fear of getting into trouble
- learning difficulties
- not getting along with a teacher

New situations – whether facing the first day in a new grade, the first day in a new school, a new teacher, new subject or new assignment, it's normal to feel nervous in a new situation, with a new teacher, a new subject and so on.

Failure – worry that their schoolwork will be too hard, they won't be able to keep up, or they won't know the correct answer when called on in class.

Fear of losing a parent – they may think something bad will happen to a parent due to:

- a parent being ill
- family problems and fighting
- parents separating
- knowing another child who has lost a parent or whose family has broken up

What can parents do? It is important not to dismiss your child's anxiety, but to help them see that the situations they are worried about may not be as bad as they think.

- Listen to your child and encourage them to tell you about their feelings and fears.
- Avoid telling your child to 'get over it'. Your child may perceive this as you not understanding or not caring about their concerns.
- Discuss various scenarios, possible outcomes and ways to handle the situation. This will help put things into perspective.
- Show your child how you cope positively when feeling anxious or stressed. Remain calm and positive when they are feeling anxious so that you can help them feel more confident.

- Avoid taking over or giving your child the impression you will fight their battles for them. Children with anxiety are usually very happy for someone else to do things for them. However, if adults take over for them, it stops them from learning how to cope for themselves as they begin to believe that someone else will rescue them.
- If your child is anxious about failure, remind your child that everyone makes mistakes and that you can learn from mistakes. Praise their best efforts.
- Talk with school staff to find out what assistance the school can provide.
- If your child has problems walking through the school front gate or getting on the bus, arrange for them to meet a friend before school so they can go to school together. Alternatively, check if there is another entrance to the school that your child feels more comfortable using.
- If your child will be late due to delays in getting ready, encourage them to still go to school and reassure them that you will contact the school to explain why they are late.
- Should your child find socialising before school a source of anxiety, arrange for them to arrive just before the bell.
- Be involved in your child's school (e.g. volunteer in the canteen, support your child's class teacher by volunteering to change home readers, sharpen pencils, laminate and cut resources, or join the P&C). Support your child with homework and study, modelling skills for becoming more independent.