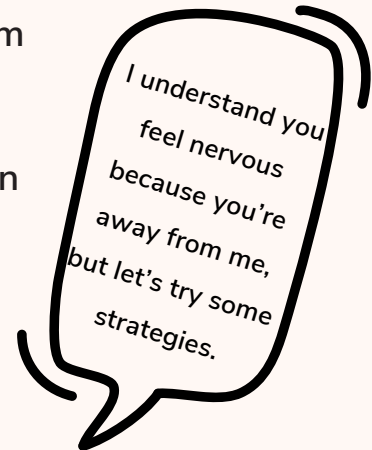


WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD DOESN'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL?



1. Be Empathic

- Talk with your child to try to understand what is bothering them and why they don't want to go to school. Acknowledge their feelings.
- Do not punish your child for refusing to go to school, as this can worsen things. They are experiencing some strong feelings about attending school and need help to calm them.
- Let your child know that you are here to help and that you believe they can face their fears and get through this problem.



2. Be firm

- Let your child know that they might be experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety (stomachaches, headaches, and fatigue), but these symptoms are not dangerous. Generally, children should only stay home from school for fever (at least 100.4° F), vomiting, or a few other reasons.
 - Physical symptoms often ease up as the school day progresses and children face their fears.
- Avoid letting your child stay home. Although staying home from school may provide short-term relief for your child, continued absence from school will lead to the feeling of being disconnected from classmates and teachers, cause your child to fall behind academically, and only make it harder to return.
 - If you do allow your child to stay home, make it boring and as school-like as possible. Do not allow access to screens (tv, computer, phone), sleeping, or lounging around (unless they are genuinely sick). If there is school work available, have them complete it, have them read, or find other learning activities for them.

3. Step in quickly

- Missed schoolwork and social experiences snowball, making school avoidance a problem that grows larger and more difficult to control as it rolls along.
- Reach out to your building administrator or social worker if you need additional assistance.