

# solutions

## WINNING THE BACK TO SCHOOL BATTLE!

Effective School Solutions welcomes you and your child back to the 2016-2017 school year! We look forward to a successful partnership, as we work together to help your children achieve their academic, behavioral and emotional goals.

For most students, summer's end is met with some back-to-school jitters, and a pang of regret that vacation is over. A small percentage of children and adolescents, though, find the start of the academic year overwhelming. If you are engaging in a battle every morning as your child resists, or actually refuses to attend school, you know how disheartening and disruptive this struggle can be. Children and adolescents with excessive school absences are often suffering from emotional issues such as anxiety or depression, which can lead to a condition known as school avoidance. The good news is that when the appropriate treatment is provided, peace at home and at school can be restored. Effective School Solutions has helped countless families face this challenge successfully.

The first step towards conquering school avoidance is timely recognition of the problem. It is so important that parents, teachers, therapists and medical practitioners collaborate, identify, and intervene with these children as early as possible. The longer a child stays out of school, the more difficult it is for that child to return. Knowing *who* is susceptible, *when* it develops, *what* the warning signs are, and *what to do* about it, significantly improves the recovery rate from this potentially debilitating condition.

### Who:

Research studies have shown that as many as 20% of school-aged children struggle with school avoidance. A child's basic temperament can make her vulnerable to school avoidance. In response to intense emotions,

someone who is hyper-sensitive, quick to react and slow to calm down, may be at risk. And, those children with a family history of anxiety are more prone to respond to stressful situations with worry, or fear, or both.

### When:

The most common ages for school avoidance to emerge is from five to seven and ten to twelve years old, but the onset can occur at any age. Symptoms may begin gradually after a change in routine: after a school vacation, a holiday, an illness, or at times of family stress.

### Warning Signs

Students with school avoidance often experience anxiety attacks and/or physical symptoms such as: headache, nausea, upset stomach, dizziness, weakness, palpitations, and/or a variety of other aches and pains which diminish when the child stays at home, or leaves school to go home early.

### Treatment at ESS:

School professionals often refer school avoidant students to the ESS Program for treatment. Sometimes, improvement can be noticed quite soon, since having a personal ally within the building often gives them the courage to work on establishing a normal school routine. Following the parent and child's completion of the School Refusal Assessment Scale, they can work with the clinician to develop an individualized treatment to conquer school refusal.

### Resources:

*International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy* Volume 1, No. 1, 2005, 46  
Moving From Assessment To Treatment Of School Refusal Behavior In Youth, Christopher A. Kearney Gillian Chapman L. Caitlin Cook University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Chu, B.C., Rizvi, S.L., Zendequi, E.A. & BonavitaCola, L., *Dialectical Behavior Therapy for School Refusal: Treatment Development and Incorporation of Web-based Coaching, Cognitive and Behavioral Practice* (2014).

Anxiety and Depression Assoc. of America: [www.adaa.org/](http://www.adaa.org/)

**PARENTS MATTER:** *The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice.*