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SCHOOL REFUSAL AND EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE ACTIVITY SUPPORT PACK





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SCHOOL REFUSAL AND EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE ACTIVITY SUPPORT PACK



Choices And Consequences
Mindful Activity

Morning Power Breaths
Breathing Activity and Song

My Best School Day
Creative Activity

After School Positive Plan
Mindful Activity

Tree Of Support
Mindful Activity

My Worry Bag
Creative Activity

My Week Of Achievements
Mindful Activity



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THE MAGIC OF "CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES"

HOW IT WORKS!

Giving children a sense of control in their choices is a game-changer! When kids feel powerless, they might resist or act out as a way to reclaim control. The magical trick? Offer choices that empower them and guide them towards what needs to get done.

The secret sauce? Make sure every option you present leads to the same positive outcome. That way, they feel confident and in charge, while you achieve your goal—it's a win-win for everyone!

What you want to ensure is that the choices they are given are two which both result in the desired outcome you wish for.

For example, if a child doesn't want to get up for school, you could offer two choices:

"Staying home is not a choice. However you do have a choice with how fun or not, your day will be and how big your brain will grow! You can get up now and have plenty of time to enjoy your favourite breakfast or morning activity. Or, you can sleep for a bit more, but that means a quick breakfast of my choice and you'll miss out on your favourite morning activity. What sounds better to you?"

More times than not, your child will choose the correct answer to which you'll respond, "That's a great choice! Let's get ready to go!"

Here are a couple more examples. Choose one that fits the situation best:

	If you choose to...	The consequence will be...
or..	Get up on time	Fun games after school
	Sleep a bit longer	No games after school
or..	Get up on time	Enjoy favourite breakfast
	Sleep a bit longer	I'll choose for you



By offering choices and consequences like this, the choice is theirs by putting the power in their hands. Always ensure the positive or negative consequence is relatable to the behaviour.



HERE

YOUR CHOICES & CONSEQUENCES

If you choose to...

The consequence will be...

HERE

MORNING POWER BREATHS

HOW THIS HELPS SUPPORT YOU

By making breathing a part of the morning routine, you and your children will experience a positive beginning to your day! Especially on challenging school mornings, “Morning Power Breaths” will help to activate the parasympathetic nervous system and help you find a sense of calm.

You can guide the practice with a child, practice yourself, and/or stick it on a wall or fridge at home or in school with the script on the following page as a reminder to use the power of the breath.

Fun fact to teach kids about the breath:

“Deep breaths send a 'calm down' signal to your brain, like a magic pause button for your feelings! How amazing is that!”

A fun jingle you can also sing!

“My morning power breaths make me strong! My brain can listen all day long! Breathe in and out, deep, calm, and slow, Now I'm ready to learn and grow!”

EASILY INTEGRATED INTO ANY MORNING ROUTINE



HERE

MORNING POWER BREATHS

(BREATHE IN FOR 4, HOLD FOR 4, BREATHE OUT FOR 6)

1. **Breathe in** deeply and slowly through your nose for a count for 4 seconds. Visualise breathing in strength and confidence into your body and mind.
2. **Hold the breath** in for a count of 4. Visualise that strength and confidence spreading across your whole body.
3. **Breathe out** for a count of 6, controlled but with a little sense of force like you are letting go of any self-doubt or tension in your mind and body.

Additional option for strength: On your breath out you can add an **affirmation** to help such as "I've got this" or "I am capable."

Repeat the above 5-10 times, feeling increasingly relaxed and strong as you go!



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“MY MORNING POWER BREATH MAKES ME STRONG!”

(THIS CAN BE SUNG TO THE TUNE OF INCY WINCY SPIDER)

“My morning power breaths make me strong!
My brain can listen all day long!
Breathe in and out, deep, calm, and slow,
Now I’m ready to learn and grow!”



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AFTER SCHOOL POSITIVE PLAN



INFORMATION PAGE

After a successful day at school, offer your child an opportunity for a positive experience as they transition from school to home.

You can discuss this in advance with your child/children to establish what would bring them joy after school, allowing them the autonomy to decide what their first 20-30 minutes will look like.

For instance, they may enjoy having their favourite snack as soon as they arrive home, followed by 15-20 minutes of playtime. Agree on a plan that works within the family's after-school schedule, and make sure to stick to it.

If helpful, you can also incorporate timings like those below into your plan.

- 1 3:20pm: Arrive home
- 2 3:20pm-3:30: Snack time
- 3 3:30-3:45pm: Free time/play
- 4 3:50pm: Homework



A child loves routine, so they will enjoy knowing what to expect, and will also enjoy the fact they have had a say in the matter!

HERE

MY AFTER SCHOOL POSITIVE PLAN



1

2

3

4

HERE

MY BEST SCHOOL DAY



HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS

It can be helpful to understand what a good day at school looks like for a child! This activity helps children become more proactive in establishing a positive start to their school day, by encouraging them to reflect on what they would like their day to look like. Use the following worksheet to explore this.

Encourage children to describe their ideal day by drawing it! It's important to emphasise that we are referring to a typical school day (rather than end-of-term days, school trips, etc.).

Allow this tool to open up a conversation about their ideal day based on whatever they have drawn or written. You could support them further by discussing ways they might be able to experience more days like this at school.

ACTIVITY BENEFITS:

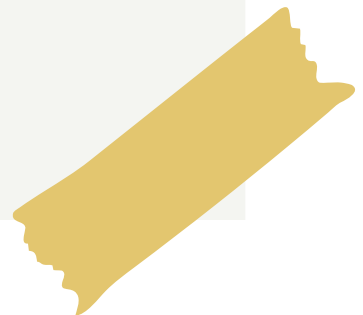
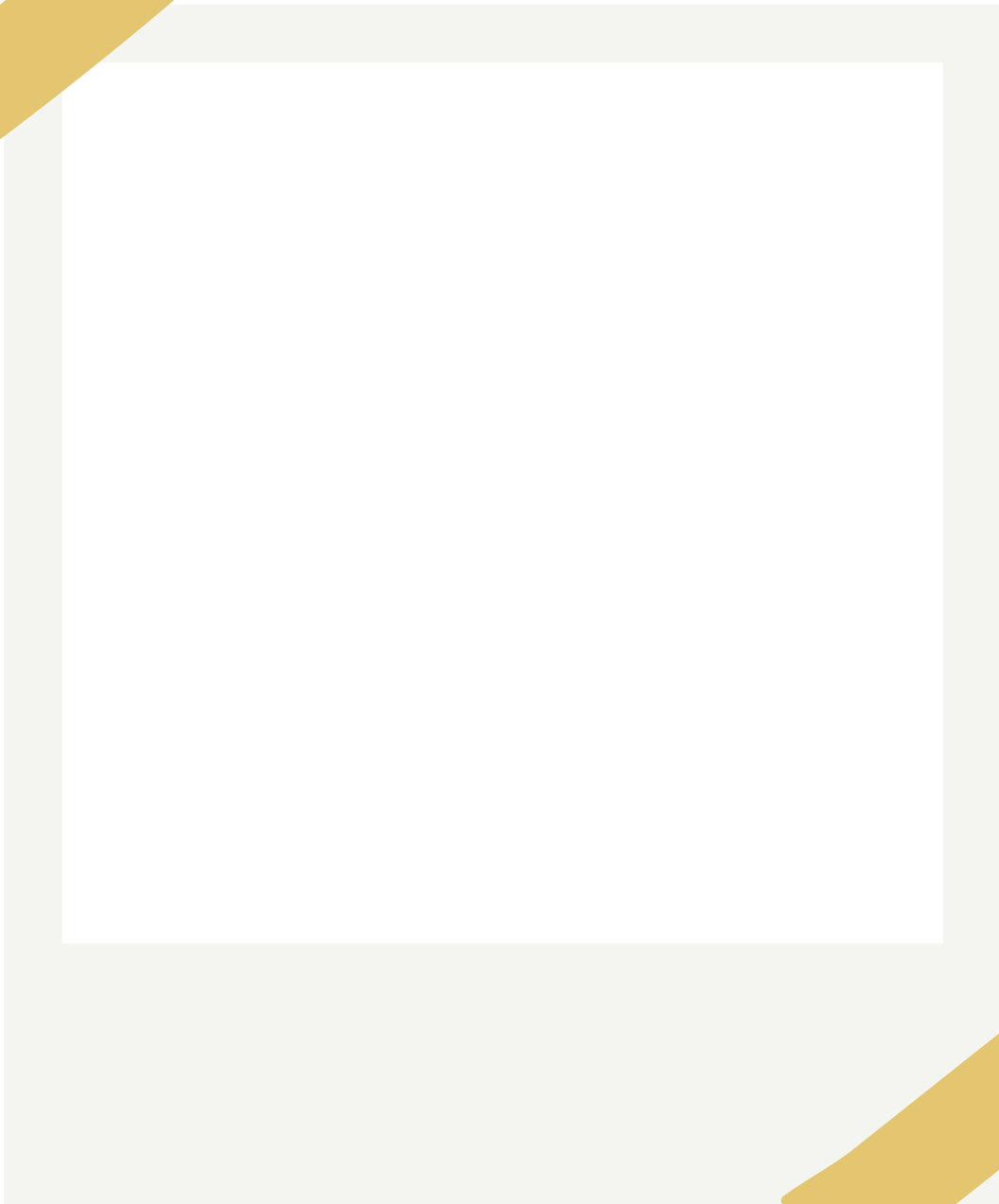
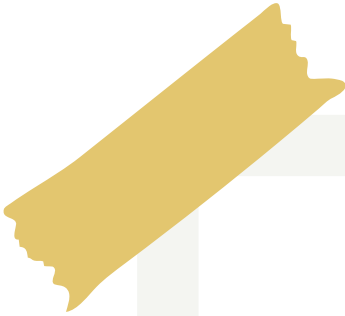
- Positive reflections can help shift a child's focus from negative feelings about school to a more optimistic perspective, especially if they can visualise elements of their ideal day.
- By introducing this activity, children are encouraged to think ahead and proactively shape their mindset, potentially reducing resistance and fostering a more positive attitude towards school.



HERE

MY BEST SCHOOL DAY

Draw a picture and/or write down any words that help explain what a good school day looks like! What would you be doing in school? Who would you be spending time with? Is there anything else that makes a school day interesting?



I really enjoy being at school when....

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TREE OF SUPPORT

INFORMATION PAGE

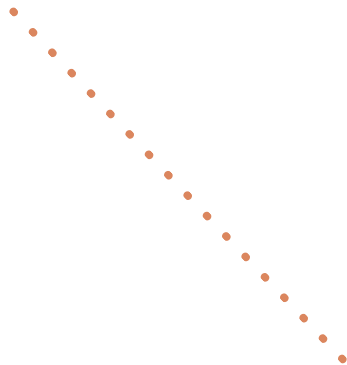
This activity can help identify who the child feels most connected to in their world, including at school, home, and any other places they are involved, such as sports and clubs.

The aim is to ask the child who in their life provides support, and how strong or weak those connections are. You can use different line shapes and even colours to represent the varying strengths of these relationships. This is a valuable activity to revisit over time to track changes in these connections. (Get creative with this activity and add dates, pictures, and anything else to help express strong and weak connections.)

FRIEND "A"

MUM

TEACHER



ME



KEY

Bold line = Strong support
Swirly line = Good support
Dotted line = Inconsistent and changing support



ACTIVITY BENEFITS:

- Encourages you to recognise your emotional needs, build healthy relationships, and understand how to manage these connections.
- Promotes healthy boundaries by helping you understand who is supportive and who may require more attention or distance.

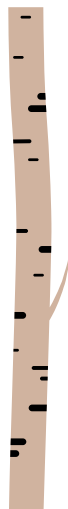
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MY TREE OF SUPPORT

This activity page is for you to draw your Tree Of Support! Who is important to you? Who is your strongest support? Is there anyone who is a good support? How about anyone who can go between being good and not so good? The space below is for you to explore your connections and express your feelings.

Starting with you as the trunk of the tree, you can add your stick branches to include anyone who is important to you, and refer to the key to decide what type of line you draw for each person!

ME



KEY

Bold line = Strong support
Swirly line = Good support
Dotted line = Inconsistent and changing support

HERE

MY WORRY BAG



HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS

It can be helpful to understand what might be worrying your child and perhaps causing their school refusal or struggles.

Opening up this question to a child could help you understand if there is an issue with a certain element of school such as a fall out with friends, difficulty staying focused and falling behind, worries about travel to and from school, not being at home to support you, and so on.

Encourage your child to imagine this bag as holding any worries they may be feeling. Invite them to draw pictures or write words that represent the things weighing them down.



♥ ACTIVITY BENEFITS:

- Helps both parent and child understand worries about school by creating a tangible, visual representation of those concerns.
- By encouraging the child to draw or write their worries, it allows them to express emotions that might be difficult to verbalise.
- Opens the space for a conversation about what's causing stress or anxiety, providing an opportunity for reassurance and support.
- Helps normalise the child's feelings, showing them they are not alone in having concerns.
- The shared experience fosters a sense of connection, understanding, and problem-solving between the parent and child.

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MY WORRY BAG

Draw a picture and/or write down any words that help explain what your biggest worry is about school. Do you feel like you are carrying around a heavy bag of worries on your back all day? It is really important to talk to others about your worries, because sharing worries can make them feel smaller and help you feel stronger.



My biggest worry is that...

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MY WEEK OF ACHIEVEMENTS



INFORMATION PAGE

This activity can help your child focus on all of the wins achieved during the week, allowing the child to go into the weekend with a sense of achievement and positivity.

Celebrating even the smallest of wins can help a child feel encouraged with positive reinforcement and focusing on the good.



I got out of bed on time all week



I completed all my homework



I got to play afterschool all week!



I went to school every day



I had fun with my friends all week



These wins can be noted down in the week as you go to help with motivation and staying on track. Alternatively, this can be completed at the end of the school week.



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MY WEEK OF ACHIEVEMENTS

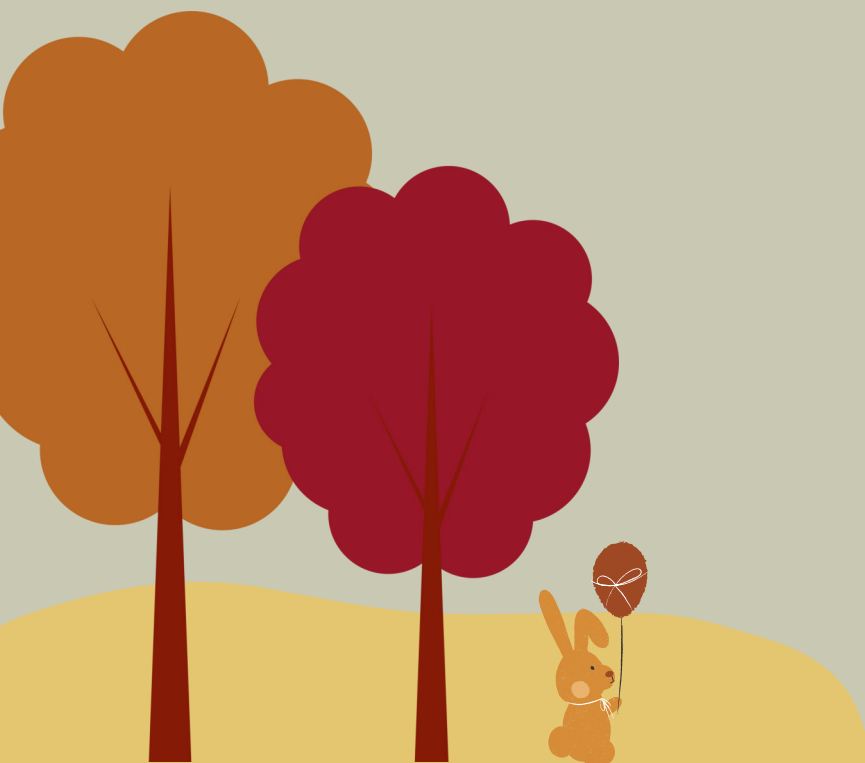


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thank you for being here

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Twitter/X: @HereFYFT



CONTACT US:
dana@hereforyouforthem.com
jen@hereforyouforthem.com