



## School Refusal

### Develop a plan for the morning routine- Setting Expectations

- Anticipate the presence of distress/anxiety
- Create a schedule for the morning
- Include coping strategies to be used
- Prepare as much as possible the night before (clothes laid out, backpack ready)
- No screen time (for most children)
- Use a transitional object (locket, item to keep in pocket or backpack, special note)
- Decide where your child will go upon arrival at school



### Develop a plan for the morning- Helping your Child Meet Expectations

- Incentives
- Incentives could be given for waking up ontime, sticking to the morning routine, using of coping strategies, and/or successfully getting to school and staying the agreed on amount of time
- Include your child in identifying incentives (playing a game with mom, a special outing with dad, picking the family movie, an extra book at bedtime, screen time, or earning a desired object)

### What do I do if my child doesn't go to school?

- Check for secondary gains
- Allow for natural consequences
- Adjust expectations and contingencies with help of school and mental health professionals
- Discuss with your child's therapist other appropriate responses

### Exception

A mental health crisis that needs intensive outpatient treatment or inpatient treatment. In those situations, it is appropriate to focus on mental health first and then work on a re-entry plan.

