

From Summer to School

Tatiana Grant, LPC



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Ahh back to school time is upon us once again. Parents are excited to have their kids return to school and kids are sad to see summer end. Many children will handle the transition from summer to school well, but a few will have difficulty. School anxiety and

school refusal are quite common this time of the year. I am a new therapist at Meredith O'Brien & Affiliates, LLC. I specialize in working with children (as young as three years old), adolescents and families in the areas of: anxiety, depression, anger management, emotional/behavioral dysregulation, self-esteem, grief, school problems, ADHD and parenting skills. I am a licensed professional counselor and a national board certified multicultural competent therapist.

Anxiety during a transitional period is normal and should not be an immediate cause for fret, however if the anxiety is affecting a person's normal routine this can be alarming.

School anxiety is defined as the irrational fear of attending school, usually stemming from something terrible happening either to the child or the child's loved ones ("What if I am bullied? What if no one picks me up after school?"). School anxiety is not as unusual as one may think and can even be seen in preschoolers. Recent studies show that anxiety disorders are one of the most common psychiatric conditions among children with as

many as ten percent suffering from them and requiring professional treatment.

Oftentimes symptoms of school anxiety will manifest physically. Common physical symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, nausea, or diarrhea. Tantrums, inflexibility, separation anxiety, avoidance, and defiance may appear as well. Changes in mood or behavior is also common. Children experiencing school anxiety may be clingier, have difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, take frequent trips to the school nurse or contact their parents to pick them up from school for non-emergency reasons.

Another form of school anxiety is school refusal. School refusal is a disorder of a child who is unwilling to go to school on a regular basis or has problems remaining in school. The child refuses to attend school due to emotional distress that can be real or perceived.

The most common treatment options for school anxiety/refusal are: psychological counseling, with cognitive behavioral therapy being the most common approach, relaxation exercises and social skills to name a few treatment modalities.

If your child is experiencing symptoms of anxiety or other emotional distressing concerns, please contact our practice to schedule an appointment.

Currently our practice is running Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills groups for teenagers and adults and an Intuitive Eating group. Please call 732-977-9729 for additional questions.

Meredith O'Brien & Affiliates, LLC
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