

Eight signs of back to school anxiety in children

September 17 2014, by Ayleen Barbel Fattal



With the start of the school year only a few days away, one of FIU's child anxiety experts, Jeremy Pettit, shares red flags parents can spot as signs of school anxiety.

- 1. Trouble with sleep as the start of the school year approaches.** Sometimes this is just normal excitement about the beginning of a new [school](#) year. However, if it's accompanied by other

behaviors on this list, it may be a sign of anxiety.

2. **Repeated requests for assurances that everything will be okay at school.** For example, children may ask for reassurance that they won't fail, that their teacher will be nice, that other kids will like them, etc.
3. **Excessive checking (and rechecking) to make sure all school materials and supplies are in order.** Checking the supplies once or twice is normal, but checking constantly to the point it becomes excessive, may be a problem.
4. **Excessive repetition of directions, schedules, rules, etc. to make sure they can be followed exactly.** Again, the key word here is excessive. Going over the rules once or twice for understanding is normal, but continued focus on rules and schedules can be a sign of anxiety.
5. **Physical complaints.** Headaches, stomachaches and even vomiting before bedtime or in the morning are common signs of anxiety about school.
6. **Irritability or mood swings as the start of school draws near.** Like the first item on the list, this behavior can occur for many reasons and anxiety about school is one of them.
7. **Social withdrawal and/or refusal to talk about school.** Shutting down and refusing to talk about school is especially common among older children and adolescents who are anxious.
8. **Once the school year starts, defiant refusals to go to school, pleas not to be taken to school, or calls to be picked up early from school.** If this starts to interfere with your child's performance in school, seek the help of a professional.

According to Pettit, some anxiety prior to the start of school is normal. In most cases, the anxiety will fade away over the first few days of school as children settle into a routine and become comfortable with their new teachers and classmates. If the [anxiety](#) persists or if it interferes with daily functioning, it's time to seek help.

Provided by Florida International University

Citation: Eight signs of back to school anxiety in children (2014, September 17) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-school-anxiety-children.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.