



# Guidelines for Addressing School Refusal Due to Tangible Rewards

School refusal due to tangible rewards occurs when children prefer staying at home over attending school because they receive immediate, rewarding benefits. These rewards could range from access to electronic devices, leisure time, to the comfort of being at home. Addressing this form of school refusal requires a strategic approach focused on understanding, setting boundaries, and creating positive reinforcements.

This handout provides parents and educators with guidelines to manage and overcome these challenges.

## *Understanding the Behaviour*

- **Identify the Rewards:** Clearly identify what rewards the child is seeking by staying home. Understanding the specific rewards can help in developing strategies to make school attendance more appealing.
- **Acknowledge the Child's Feelings:** Recognize and validate the child's feelings without endorsing their refusal behaviour. It's important to communicate that while their feelings are understood, attending school is non-negotiable.

## *Setting Boundaries*

- **Establish Clear Rules:** Set clear and consistent rules regarding screen time, leisure activities, and other rewards. These should be distinctly different between school days and non-school days.
- **Consistent Follow-Through:** Consistency is key. Once rules are set, it's crucial to stick to them to avoid sending mixed messages to the child.

## *Creating Positive Reinforcements*

- **Positive Reinforcement for School Attendance:** Develop a system of positive reinforcement for attending school. Rewards should be immediate and linked to school attendance, such as a points system leading to a weekend activity.
- **Involve the Child in Decision Making:** Allow the child to have a say in what rewards they can work towards. This involvement can increase their motivation to attend school.

## *Collaboration and Support*

- **Work with the School:** Collaborate with teachers and school counsellors to ensure that the child is supported in school and that school attendance is positively reinforced.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** If school refusal persists, consider seeking help from a mental health professional with experience in this area. They can provide strategies tailored to your child's specific needs.

## *Encouraging Independence and Self-Motivation*



## Helps Counselling

- **Build School-Related Skills:** Encourage activities that build skills valuable in school, such as reading, writing, or problem-solving. Highlighting progress in these areas can motivate school attendance.
- **Focus on Long-Term Goals:** Discuss the importance of education and how it aligns with their long-term interests or goals. This can help shift their perspective on the value of attending school.

Remember, addressing school refusal due to tangible rewards is a process that requires patience, consistency, and cooperation. By establishing clear boundaries, creating positive reinforcements, and working closely with educational professionals, parents can guide their children towards valuing education and attending school regularly.

**Source of Information:** This handout written with the aid of OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (4) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

*This handout is intended for parents. It aims provide a basic guide for addressing school refusal due to tangible rewards. While informative, it is intended as an educational resource and not a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment.*