

14th September 2018

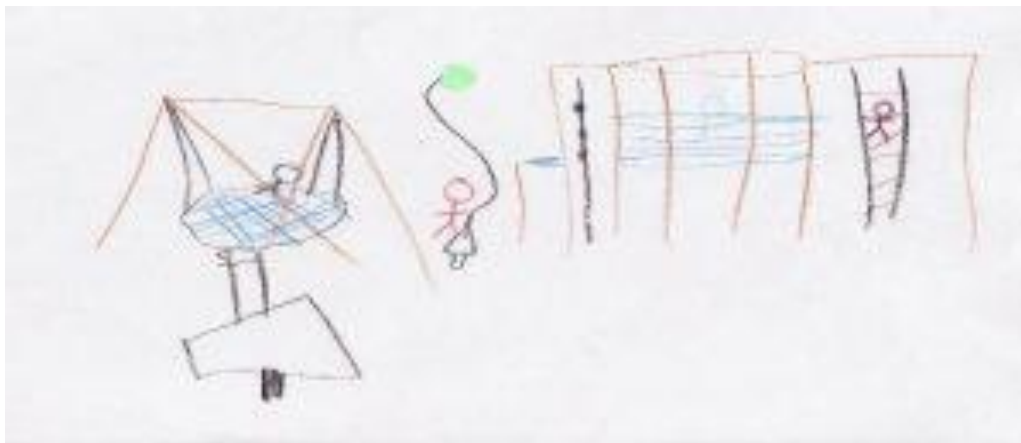
What can I Do if my Child Doesn't Want to go Back to School?

If your child doesn't want to go back to school, it's important to talk about the reasons why they feel this way openly and honestly.

Once you have established the reasons for their not wanting to go back to school, you can begin to address them. For example, your child may not want to return to school because they don't like the school yard at break time, or they're struggling to socialise with their classmates. This is perfectly understandable, as your child may feel overwhelmed by the lack of predictability in a school yard at breaktime or your child may experience challenges, filtering the different sounds due to sensory issues. In other words, your child may be experiencing high levels of anxiety, in a situation, which doesn't impinge on many other children.

It is critically important to discuss the reasons for your child not wanting to go back to school with both your child and their teacher in order to find a solution to the problem.

Allowing your child to stay inside during breaktime is not the solution to this dilemma. It is interesting that in a study carried out in Irish schools, many autistic children drew photographs of the playground similar to the drawing below, indicating an interest in playing and underlining the importance of adults ensuring the child benefits from these experiences. The drawing below was completed by a child in the early years of primary school.



Possible solutions you can discuss with your child's teacher include, setting up a buddy-system in the school; designating a quieter corner of the playground for children who would prefer less noise and providing materials in this corner for children to play with and or organising structured leisure activities during breaktime. You will be surprised now many children, who do not have autism, gravitate to these quieter spaces!

The main thing is to consult with your child and find the reasons why your child is reluctant to go back to school. Once you have identified the reason, there is always a solution, which you can discuss with your child and your child's teacher.

Adapted from: <https://asiam.ie/what-can-i-do-if-my-child-doesnt-want-to-go-back-to-school/>

Dr Emer Ring is the Head of the Department of Reflective Pedacology and Early Childhood Studies at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. As part of our *#BackToRoutine* series for beginning the new school term, she's answered a number of commonly asked questions and concerns families have when starting school.