

Why Can't I Go to School?

SOCIAL STORY

To keep staff and students safe and minimize the spread of COVID-19, many schools around the world have closed their doors. For children, this abrupt disruption to routine can feel confusing and scary. Translated into six languages, this social story answers the question, “Why Can't I Go to School?” in simple and reassuring terms.

Conscious Discipline Certified Instructor Abbi Kruse developed this resource to answer the question, “Why Can't I Go to School?” for students at her own early learning center in Madison, Wisconsin. The story was then translated into multiple languages by students and staff in the University of Wisconsin System. This PDF includes Abbi's social story in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Arabic and Turkish.

For children (and adults), predictability and routine feel safe. Sudden change is often scary and leaves children feeling anxious. Anxiety is soothed with information, so it's helpful to answer children's questions and explain why their usual routines have changed.

However, talking to young children about COVID-19 is challenging, especially when we remain worried and uncertain ourselves. This simple social story gives you the reassuring language and age-appropriate information to help children understand why they can't go to school right now.

What Are Social Stories?

Social stories are visual reminders typically used to teach children appropriate behavior. These behaviors can be related to procedures, like how to stay safe on the school bus or successfully follow a bedtime routine.

They can also teach social behaviors, like how to manage anxiety when a parent goes to work or how to express frustration in a healthy manner. Social stories help children make sense of their own feelings and the world around them.

How to Use Social Stories

When a child is missing a skill or struggling to navigate a situation, social stories can help. If possible, it's especially powerful to include pictures of the child or children in action throughout the story.

Read social stories often to ensure children understand the message. Pause after each page to ask or answer questions, and even roleplay if it's helpful.

Remember, too, that reading a story can always represent a precious moment of connection. Be present as you read the story with your child, enjoying your time together. Connection translates into increased cooperation, willingness, and impulse control. During these unprecedented times, connection with our loved ones is more valuable than ever.

To learn more about social stories, read the article [Teaching Missing Skills: The Power of Social Stories](#).