

ANXIETY IN CHILDREN: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is the body's natural response to stress or fear, but when it becomes excessive or persistent, it can interfere with a child's daily life. School-age children can experience anxiety related to academic pressure, social challenges, family changes, or fears about the future.



Common Signs of Anxiety

Anxiety may show up differently in every child, but here are some common signs to watch for:

Emotional Signs

- Frequent worry or fear about everyday situations
- Increased sensitivity or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating

Physical Signs

- Complaints of stomachaches or headaches, or muscle tension
- Trouble sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Fatigue or restlessness

Behavioral Signs

- Avoidance of certain activities, places, or people
- Reassurance-seeking ("Will everything be okay?")
- Sudden outbursts or clinginess

School-Related Signs

- Resistance to attending school
- Frequent visits to the nurse
- Avoiding socializing or group work



HELPFUL RESOURCES

[The Kids Mental Health Foundation](https://www.kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org/)

Articles with information on anxiety and anxiety disorders and strategies to support your child.



[The Child Mind Institute](https://www.childmind.org/)

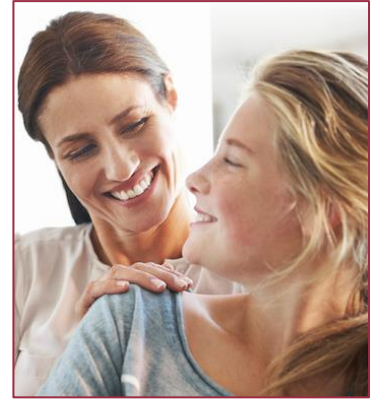
Learn about different types of anxiety, signs of the disorder, and how to support anxious children.

[Healthy Children.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/)

Provides tips to help your child manage anxiety at home and at school.



How Parents Can Help



Recognize and Validate Feelings

- Let your child know it is okay to feel anxious.
- Acknowledge their feelings and show empathy.

Provide Reassurance, But Avoid Over-Accommodating

- Support your child without reinforcing avoidance behaviors.
- Encourage small steps to face fears.

Teach Relaxation Techniques

- Practice deep breathing, mindfulness, or progressive muscle relaxation together.

Encourage Problem-Solving

- Help your child identify challenges and brainstorm ways to tackle them.

Maintain Predictable Routines

- Structure and consistency can help reduce anxiety.

Limit Exposure to Triggers

- For example, reduce time spent on social media if it heightens worries.

Seek Professional Support

- If anxiety persists or worsens, consult a health care professional.

When to Seek Help

If your child's anxiety begins to interfere with their ability to function normally at home, school, or socially, or if they show consistent signs of intense fear or withdrawal, consult a healthcare professional. Early intervention can make a big difference.



RESOURCES! For more info check out these books:

Freeing Your Child from Anxiety

by Tamar E. Chansky, PhD

A comprehensive guide offering practical strategies to help children cope with anxiety.

What to Do When You Worry Too Much

by Dawn Huebner, PhD

A workbook for kids and parents to address worry through engaging exercises.

Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

by Ronald Rapee, PhD

A step-by-step program that focuses on evidence-based techniques.

The Opposite of Worry

by Lawrence J. Cohen, PhD

Focuses on play-based and nurturing approaches to anxiety.