



Kids On Track

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

All children and young people get anxious at times, and this is a normal part of their development as they grow up and develop their 'survival skills', so they can face challenges in the wider world. We all have different levels of stress we can cope with – some people are just naturally more anxious than others, and are quicker to get stressed or worried. There are many ways you can help your child to manage their anxiety.

If you feel your child's anxiety is not getting any better or is getting worse, and your efforts have not worked, contact your family doctor to get professional support.

Helping Your Child with ANXIETY

FROM THE PARENT CAFE

DO-ABLE THINGS AT HOME

- Talk to your child about anxiety, what is happening in their body and why it happens. Many children and young people don't know what they are feeling when they are anxious, and it can be very frightening or overwhelming. They might even think they are very ill or that they are having a heart attack.
- Help them to recognize anxious feelings so they can tell when they are becoming anxious and can ask for help
- Tell your child it will be okay, and the anxiety will pass. It can be helpful to describe the anxiety as wave to ride or surf that gets smaller after it peaks.
- Get your child to breathe deeply and slowly, in through the nose for three counts and out through their mouth for three counts. You can even challenge them to draw it out to five counts in and five counts out. We call this 3-3-3 breathing or 5-5-5 breathing.
- Distract them by focusing on something else. For example, one mom has had success with breaking the anxiety cycle with her six year old by showing him pictures of himself as a baby. It distracts him and he can once again gain control of his breathing.
- Give them a cuddle or hold their hand if they will let you- touch can be soothing. It can help to talk to your child about finding a safe place in their mind- somewhere that they feel relaxed and happy. It may be a grandparent's or friend's house or a holiday beside the sea which they can picture when "scary thoughts" come into their head or they are feeling anxious. Sometimes holding a memento, like a seashell or pebble, can help.
- If your child is feeling the need to check things or repeat certain actions, suggest they count to 10 before they start checking as a delaying tactic.
- Encourage your child to notice what makes them anxious. Talking it through can help but your child could also try keeping a diary or a "worry book."



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REFERENCES

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-anxiety/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Howard B. Wigglebottom video about fear & courage](#)

[Shaggy Gets Scared](#)

[Buttercup: What Can I Do When I'm Worried?](#)

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FROM THE PARENT CAFE

DO-ABLE THINGS AT HOME CON'T

- Make a "worry box." Your child can write each worry down and post it in the box out of sight. Encourage them to decorate their box as well. They can leave the worries there for a designated time (i.e. a week) to see if they were worth worrying about. If they weren't, then the child can tear it up and throw it in the garbage. Alternatively, you could designate a specific "worry time" for around 10-20 minutes-- just not too close to bed time! That way worries can be saved up for that time and talked about then. This gives the message that we are in control of our worries, not the other way around.
- Work on positive-thinking. Name their worst case scenarios and think through together how to sort out the situation if it happens, e.g. 'I'm worried that we'll miss the bus.' 'What do you think we could do if that happens?' 'We could get the next bus'.
- Help them maintain a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise to reduce the levels of stress hormones, good sleeping habits, calm bedtime routines, limited screen or computer time in the evening, and a healthy diet.

Don't worry about anything

BUT PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS OFFER UP YOUR PRAYERS AND REQUESTS TO GOD. THEN, BECAUSE YOU BELONG TO CHRIST JESUS, GOD WILL BLESS YOU WITH PEACE THAT NO ONE CAN COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND. AND THIS PEACE WILL CONTROL THE WAY YOU THINK AND FEEL.

Philippians 4:6-7



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FROM THE PARENT CAFE

WORK THROUGH WITH YOUR CHILD

Fear or Worry

Worst thing that can happen

Best thing that can happen

Most likely to happen

	What can I do to stop the worst from happening?	What can I do to help make the best thing happen?	What can I do to handle the most likely thing when it happens?

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