

Parent Guide: Supporting a Child with Anxiety
From: <http://childanxiety.org/wps/parent-resources/tips-for-parents/>

Demonstrate Empathy and Compassion:

It is important to acknowledge, listen to, and re-state or paraphrase their fears to show that you understand what is causing them to feel distressed.

Normalize Anxiety:

After you have validated your child's anxiety, it's often helpful to let your child know that anxiety is a normal response to events that are scary. Many people are anxious when they have to perform on stage or give a report in front of the class, for example. Provide them with examples of how other people have coped with their anxiety, perhaps with a real-life hero or superhero the child enjoys.

Address Negative Thinking:

People with anxiety often have negative biases in their thoughts. They may think that the worst is going to happen, and if it does, they won't be able to manage it. It is often helpful to talk with your child and help them to learn to identify inaccurate thoughts they may have. Then, your child can practice challenging these "thinking errors and replace them with a more positive thought.

Prevent Avoidance Behaviors:

We are all tempted to avoid things that frighten us. Avoidance of feared situations can be very effective in the short term, but in the long term it prevents people from learning that they can cope with their fears and that the worst may not even happen. Plus, your child may miss out on fun activities, like attending a birthday party or playing on a sports team. Try to prevent avoidance behaviors by encouraging your child to face his/her fears and cope constructively in the face of anxiety.

Model and Reinforce Brave Behavior:

As mentioned above, we all experience anxiety. Remember to be a coping model for your child. You can talk about a time that you felt anxious, how you coped with it, and how the outcome may have been better than you expected. Think about your own behavior . . . are there times that you may model inappropriate coping behavior for your child? Finally, it is tempting to give your child lots of attention when he or she is anxious. Be sure to also praise and reward your child when he/she faces her fears and copes effectively!

Websites with information on youth anxiety and related concerns

- University of California San Francisco: <https://capp.ucsf.edu/family-resources>
- Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies: www.abct.org
- Anxiety Disorders Association of America: www.adaa.org
- The International OCD Foundation: iocdf.org/
- Children's and Adult Center for OCD and Anxiety: www.worrywisekids.org
- Anxiety Canada: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>
- For selective mutism: <https://www.selectivemutism.org/>
- For body-focused repetitive behaviors: <https://www.bfrb.org/>
- Lumate Health: lumatehealth.com

Referral Resources Online

- www.abct.org/FindATherapist
- <https://members.adaa.org/page/FATMain>
- www.OCFoundation.org/findhelp
- www.childanxietySIG.com/referralnetwork
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for young children (ages 3 to 7): <https://www.pcit.org/>;
<https://pcit.ucdavis.edu/find-a-provider/united-states/>

Parent programs for youth anxiety:

- Online parent-training program for youth anxiety: <http://www.copingcatparents.com/>
- One-session online program for parents of children/pre-teens with anxiety:
<https://www.schleiderlab.org/empower.html>
- SPACE program: <https://www.spacetreatment.net/>

Books That May Be Helpful For Parents:

- *Helping your anxious child: A step-by-step guide for parents* by Ronald Rapee, Ann Wignall, Susan Spence, Vanessa Cobham, and Heidi Lyneham
- *Freeing your child from anxiety: Powerful, practical solutions to overcome your child's fears* by Tamar Chansky
- *Talking Back to OCD* by John March and Christine Benton
- *Breaking free of child anxiety and OCD* by Eli Lebowitz

Books That May Be Helpful For Children and Teenagers:

- *What to do when you worry too much: A kid's guide to overcoming anxiety* by Dawn Huebner
- *Up and down the worry hill: A children's book about obsessive-compulsive disorder* by Aureen Wagner
- *A little Spot of Anxiety* by Diane Alber
- *Playing with Anxiety: Casey's Guide for Teens and Kids* by Reid Wilson, Lynn Lyons
- *The Anxiety Survival Guide for Teens: CBT Skills to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Panic* by Jennifer Shannon
- *Anxiety Sucks! A Teen Survival Guide* by Natasha Daniels