



# PARENTS CONNECT @ADPS

## Anxiety In Our Children

Just like adults, children and young people feel worried and anxious at times. But if your child's anxiety is starting to affect their wellbeing, they may need some help.

### How do I manage anxiety in my child/children?

Dear Parents,  
In our previous newsletter, we shared strategies on how to manage your expectations of your children. The primary school years are extremely crucial in nurturing in your child the right set of values that will help set their direction throughout the rest of their life and provide them with the right coping strategies. Fostering a positive mindset in our children today can be a challenge as they are faced with numerous hurdles in their young life. With the right aptitude, your child will develop the right attitude. We hope this edition will provide you with more strategies to help foster your child's tenacity and build confidence in your child. Happy reading and enjoy exploring the strategies shared. Thank you!

Yours faithfully,  
ADPS School Counselling Team





## Scenario:

My child is always sleeping late. I must sleep beside him/her before he/she goes to sleep. Last night, he/she had a restless night and kept on coming to my room and in the end he/she slept with us. It is so frustrating. Sometimes, he/she refuses to go to school. He/she complains of stomachache and is in a lot of pain but the doctor says that he/she does not have any problem. Is my child lying to me or is he/she having problems with his/her friends? Is it because the teacher does not like my child. It is so upsetting and frustrating as it is affecting my work.

You may tick (✓) more than one option.

### Section A

- I force my child to go to school.
- I cane him if he/she does not listen.
- I blame his friend or teachers for his refusal to go to school.

### Section B

- I make an appointment to meet the form teacher so that we can work together to support my child.
- I listen to my child to understand his/her feelings.
- I find out more about how to help support my child.

\*How many of you ticked more of the options in Section B from the Scenario above. These options will definitely lead you towards understanding and managing your child's anxiety.

If you want more understanding about anxiety and strategies how to help yourself and your child cope with anxiety. This is a very good link to do so.

<https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/how-to-explain-anxiety-to-kids/>

---

## What makes children anxious?

Children can feel anxious about different things at different ages. Many of these worries are a normal part of growing up. From the age of around 6 months to 3 years it's very common for young children to have separation anxiety. They may become clingy and cry when separated from their parents or care givers. This is a normal stage in a child's development and should stop at around age 2 to 3.



It is also common for preschool-age children to develop specific fears or phobias. Common fears in early childhood include animals, insects, storms, heights, water, blood and the dark. These fears usually go away gradually on their own.



There may also be other times in a child's life when they feel anxious. For example, many children feel anxious when going to a new school or before tests and exams. Some children feel shy in social situations and may need support with this.

## When is anxiety a problem for children?

Anxiety becomes a problem for children when it starts to get in the way of their everyday life. If you go into any school at exam time, all the children will be anxious, but some may be so anxious that they do not manage to get to school that morning.





## What are the signs of anxiety in children?



When young children feel anxious, they cannot always understand or express what they are feeling. You may notice that they:

- become irritable, tearful or clingy
- have difficulty sleeping
- wake in the night
- start [wetting the bed](#)
- have bad dreams

In older children you may notice that they:

- lack confidence to try new things or seem unable to face simple, everyday find it hard to concentrate.
- have problems with sleeping or eating.
- have angry outbursts.
- have a lot of negative thoughts or keep thinking that bad things are going to happen.
- start avoiding everyday activities, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school.

Find out more about the symptoms of anxiety on our page about [anxiety disorders in children](#).

## Why is my child anxious?

Some children are more likely to have worries and anxiety than others.

Children often find change difficult and may become anxious following a house move or when starting a new school.

Children who have had a distressing or traumatic experience, such as a car accident or house fire, may have anxiety afterwards.

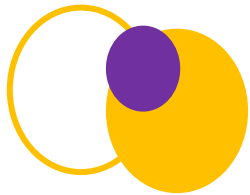
Family arguments and conflict can also make children feel insecure and anxious.

Teenagers are more likely to have social anxiety than other age groups, avoiding social gatherings or making excuses to get out of them.





## How to help an anxious child?



If your child/children is/are experiencing anxiety, there are things that parents and care givers can do to help:

(1) First and foremost, it is important to talk to your child about their anxiety or worries. Reassure them and show them you understand how they feel. Get them to open-up and talk about their fears and anxieties. Be a good listener.

(2) If your child is old enough, it may help to explain what anxiety is and the physical effects it has on our bodies. It may be helpful to describe anxiety as being like a wave that builds up and then goes away again. Teach them coping strategies like awareness breathing.

(3) As well as talking to your child/children about their worries and anxiety, it is important to help them find solutions. For example, if your child is worried about going to a sleepover, it is natural to want to tell them not to go. However, this could mean your child feels that their anxiety will stop them from doing things. It is better to recognise their anxiety and suggest solutions to help them, so they can go to the sleepover with a plan in place, something for them to fall back on if they feel anxious at any point.

## Other Ways To Ease Anxiety In Children

- teach your child to recognise signs of anxiety in themselves.
- encourage your child to manage their anxiety and ask for help when they need it
- children of all ages find routines reassuring, so try to stick to regular daily routines where possible
- if your child is anxious because of distressing events, such as a bereavement or separation, look for books or films that will help them to understand their feelings
- if you know a change, such as a house move, is coming up, prepare your child by talking to them about what is going to happen and why
- try not to become overprotective or anxious yourself
- practise simple relaxation techniques with your child, such as taking 3 deep, slow breaths, breathing in for a count of 3 and out for 3.
- distraction can be helpful for young children. For example, if they are anxious about going to nursery, play games on the way there, such as seeing who can spot the most number of red cars.
- turn an empty tissue box into a "worry" box. Get your child to write about or draw their worries and "post" them into the box. Then you can sort through the box together at the end of the day or week.

### **Find out more**

- [Young Minds: supporting your child with anxiety](#)
- [Health for Teens: practical advice about dealing with anxiety](#)

### **When should we get help?**

If your child's anxiety is severe, persists and interferes with their everyday life, it is a good idea to get some help.

A visit to a GP is a good place to start. If your child's anxiety is affecting their school life, it is a good idea to talk to the School Counsellor

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-in-children/>



# RETHINKING POWER NEEDS

@kwiens62



POWER IS NOT LIKE A  
REMOTE CONTROL  
WHERE ONLY ONE PERSON HAS  
ALL THE POWER AND CONTROL.



POWER IS LIKE A CANDLE.  
YOU CAN GIVE A CHILD POWER WITHOUT  
GIVING AWAY ANY OF YOUR OWN POWER.



YOU DON'T HAVE A SET  
AMOUNT OF POWER  
~ LIKE A BUCKETFUL.  
THERE ARE WAYS TO GIVE A  
CHILD POWER WITHOUT  
LOSING ANY OF YOUR OWN.

## KIDS DON'T WANT YOUR POWER. THEY WANT THEIR OWN.

RICHARD LAVOIE



WHEN A STUDENT FEELS THEY HAVE

POWER WITH  
THE ADULTS  
AS WELL AS

POWER WITHIN  
THEMSELVES

THEY'LL HAVE LESS NEED TO SEEK

POWER OVER  
OTHERS

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF  
POWER CAN HELP WITH THIS

“SEE A CHILD  
DIFFERENTLY...  
SEE A DIFFERENT  
CHILD”

STUART SHANKER

### 6 WAYS TO HELP KIDS MEET THEIR POWER NEEDS

1. OFFER CHOICE, NOT ORDERS
2. GIVE RESPONSIBILITY
3. START WITH STRENGTHS
4. EXPRESS INTEREST RATHER THAN PRAISE
5. ASK FOR THEIR OPINION
6. ASK FOR THEIR HELP

### 6 POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. AVOID POWER STRUGGLES
2. AVOID MAKING THREATS
3. GROWING POWER NEEDS ARE A HEALTHY PART OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
4. RESPECT BOUNDARIES
5. THE RULES (NOT THE ADULT) SHOULD BE OBEYED
6. REFLECT ON YOUR OWN NEED FOR POWER & CONTROL

“THE REALITY IS THAT NO ONE WINS A POWER STRUGGLE” ROSS GREENE

# HOW TO EMPOWER CHILDREN WHEN THEY STRUGGLE

Big Life Journal

## 1 LISTEN AND EMPATHIZE

Practice listening when your child vents to you about a problem.

- Provide **choices**
- **Validate** your child's feelings
- Ask your child **open-ended questions**
- **Prompting** with questions like,
- You can also **ask**, "What do you need from me?"

"What do you think would happen if you tried \_\_\_\_?"

## 2 MODEL THE ATTITUDE YOU WANT TO SEE

Practice listening when your child vents to you about a problem.

- Use **phrases** like, "This is hard. I need a break," or, "This is hard. I'm going to keep trying."
- **Ask** your child to help you brainstorm solutions.
- **Avoid** expressing negative opinions of yourself or making comments like, "I can't do this."
- Focus on the **positive**. Was a lesson learned? Did you improve? Did you overcome the struggle--and how great did it feel?

## 3 BUILD UP CONFIDENCE WITH AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS

Boost your child's feelings of confidence and capability by allowing him to do age-appropriate tasks on his own.

GETTING DRESSED

MAKING THE BED

PICKING UP TOYS

PREPARING FOODS LIKE CEREAL OR TOAST



## 4 REMIND THEM OF PAST STRUGGLES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Remind your child of tasks that were once difficult and became easier with time.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S STRENGTHS?

HOW DID HE GROW THESE STRENGTHS?



## 5 TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Teach a simple process like the following:

- **Step 1:** What am I feeling?
- **Step 2:** What's the **problem**?
- **Step 3:** What are the **solutions**?
- **Step 4:** What would **happen** if...?
- **Step 5:** What will I try?

## 6 KNOW WHEN TO LEND A HAND

Step in when:

- There is a **safety concern**.
- When a task that is **not developmentally appropriate**.
- A **skill(s) needs to be learned** before your child can succeed.
- Your child has tried multiple strategies and persevered, but is **still struggling**. In this case, offer guidance and help. Then, discuss what your child learned and praise the effort/progress.