

Anxiety - 5 ways to help your child.

Recognizing anxiety and helping your child cope

Childhood is often thought of as a carefree time without worries. However, it's important to know that children do have anxiety, just like adults. The good news is you can help your child better handle anxiety. Nicholas J. Westers, Psy.D., ABPP, clinical psychologist at Children's HealthSM shares 5 ways you can help your child with anxiety:

1. **Learn to see when your child is feeling anxious.** It's easy to see that your child is feeling anxiety when they are clearly panicking. But sometimes, it is not as obvious. If your child shows signs of irritability, anger and not wanting to do anything you ask, it may be a sign of anxiety.
2. **Remind them anxiety is normal.** Letting your child that it's normal to have some anxiety is the first step in helping them cope. You can say, "I sense that you're feeling anxious, and that's okay."
3. **Remain calm.** Your child will react to your actions, so it's important to remain calm. Our children feed off our own anxieties, so if we portray that, it can make them more anxious. We want to make sure they can look to us as a safe place — someone who is consistent and calm.
4. **Teach relaxation skills.** Teach your child how to breathe deeply when they feel anxious. With them, take a deep breath, hold it for a count to 8 and then let it go slowly. You can also teach them to picture a peaceful place where they felt calm, such as a favorite family vacation spot or a cozy corner of their room.
5. **Speak to a professional if anxiety continues.** If your child continues to have a lot of anxiety, or if anxiety interferes with their normal day-to-day routines and fun, talk with their doctor about other ways to help your child.

Learn more

We have doctors who help children and teens manage feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. Learn more about programs we offer to support mental, emotional, and behavioral health.

You can also get emotional care and support from the comfort of your home with Virtual Visit Behavioral Health. With a virtual behavioral health care appointment, you can speak to a psychiatrist or licensed therapist using video technology. Learn more about Virtual Visit Behavioral Health.