

Supporting Children with Anxiety

Symptoms of anxiety in children

finding it hard to concentrate
not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams
bed wetting
not eating properly
quickly getting angry or irritable, and being out of control during
outbursts
constantly worrying or having negative thoughts
feeling tense and fidgety, or using the toilet often
always crying
being clingy
complaining of tummy aches and feeling unwell

Why might my child be 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, may have anxiety afterwards
Family arguments and conflict can also make children feel insecure and anxious



Supporting your child with anxiety

listen to what your child has to say
be understanding and patient with them
if your child is old enough, talk to them about anxiety
talk to the school and tell them your concerns
use a thought diary to help them see their worries and rationalise them
work with your child to find solutions to their worries
teach your child to recognise anxiety and how it feels
encourage your child to ask for help when they feel anxious
stick to routines - routines are reassuring for children

Relaxation and distraction techniques

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 school, play games on the way there, such as seeing who can spot the most red cars
turn an empty box into a "worry" box. Get your child to write about or draw their worries and "post" them into the box. Look at these together with your child
practise the 5-4-3-2-1 technique - 5 things you can see at this very moment, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and one thing you can taste
try not to become overprotective of your child