

Anxiety in children is very treatable but it might take time. Keep practicing and they'll get there.

If you would like any further support or advice, contact your School Nurse or GP.

You can also access the following websites:

www.minded.org.uk www.youngminds.org.uk

www.themix.org.uk www.childline.co.uk

Or try these books:

- The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside
- Silly Billy by Anthony Browne
- What To Do When You Dread Your Bed by Dawn Huebner
- I'm Worried by Brian Moses
- Have You Filled A Bucket Today? by Carol McCloud



virgin**care**

ANXIETY AND WORRIES IN YOUNG CHILDREN



A guide of resources and tips for
parents and carers

1. Normalise

Explain to your child that everyone worries



- that it's a normal part of life.

2. Body Clues

Help your child to understand what is happening inside of their body.



Remind them that their physical complaints may be their body's way of telling them something.

Encourage them to take charge of their bodies by using relaxation strategies

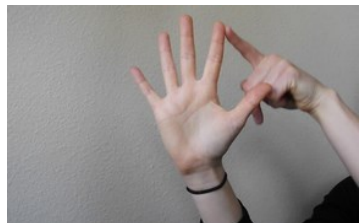


eg. Dingle Dangle Scarecrow

Tracing fingers

Milkshake

breathing



11. Be a role model

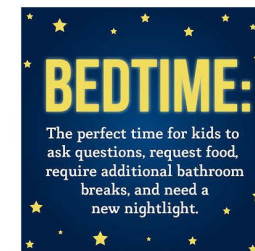
Be honest about your feelings. You don't have to be perfect. We all get things wrong sometimes. Say sorry to your child afterwards & explain why it happened.

They will learn from this that it is ok to make mistakes and that it doesn't make you a bad person.

12. Bedtime

Introduce "3 good things that have happened today" or "3 things that we can be grateful for".

Involve yourself in your child's world with a non-critical ear.



9. Screens

Continual use of screens has been linked to



poor mental health. Try the following tips:

- Have screen-free times/areas at home
- Keep screens out of bedrooms
- Keep screens away from bedtimes
- Be a good role model
- Keep active and get outside for at least one hour a day

10. Be the Parent

Own your own role.

Don't be afraid to take tough decisions.

If you always give in to them, it can make children feel very powerful, which can be frightening.

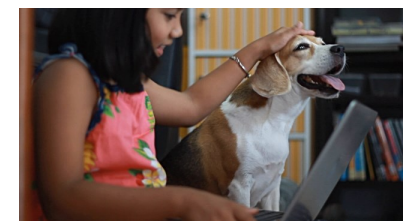


3. Chunking

Make a problem more manageable by breaking it down into smaller parts eg anxiety around dogs.

Find achievable steps and reward your child each step:

- Look at a photo of a dog
- Hold a toy dog
- Be in the same garden as a small dog in a cage
- Be in the same garden as a dog on a lead
- Move closer to the dog
- Touch the dog for one second, etc, etc



4. Don't Avoid



Don't avoid things that your child worries about. Instead, set a time aside each day to discuss their worries.

5. Worry Box

Get a box and decorate it.



Encourage your child to write down or draw their worries and put them in the box.

Sit down together every day and take out the worries one by one.

Discuss them together and, if you can solve them, rip them up & throw them away.

If not, put them back into the box to discuss another day.

6. Worry Dolls

Guatemalan worry dolls were for children to tell their worries too. Children put them under their pillows at night and the doll, and their worries, were gone in the morning (removed by parents when they slept).



7. Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

Ask your child:

- Is this way of thinking helpful?
- Is this really true?
- Are you thinking in extremes eg using "always", "must", "every time"?
- How can you make this unhelpful thought into a helpful one?
- Are you forgetting the positives?



8. Model Relaxation

Make a list of the things you can do to feel good and relax.

When you notice yourself feeling stressed or worried, try out one of your strategies. Tell your child what you are doing to relax and how you feel.

