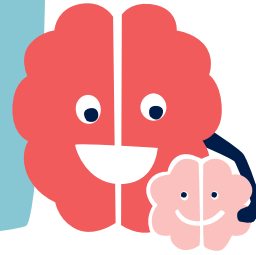


6 practical tips to support your child when they're feeling anxious

Parent Resource

This resource has been developed in collaboration with Clinical Psychologist, Dr Jodie Lowinger.



Emotional validation

Acknowledge and validate your child's feelings first without rushing to problem solve.



Deep breathing techniques

Teach your child to take slow, long out breaths, to use when they may be feeling anxious or worried about something (e.g., "imagining blowing on a hot chocolate").



Teflon armour analogy

Help your child imagine worries or harsh words sliding off them like water on Teflon. This technique helps children visualise how they can let go of negative thoughts or comments without letting them stick or affect their sense of self-worth. This approach can also be a helpful tool for parents, especially when dealing with reactive tweens and teens. Adolescents can often be quick to react emotionally, and using the Teflon armour analogy can help parents remain calm and not take things personally when tempers flare. By modelling this skill, parents show their children how to navigate challenging interactions without letting emotional turbulence take over.



Growth mindset language

Praise your child's effort, progress, and self-kindness rather than just outcomes. By doing this you help them see challenges as opportunities to learn, rather than something to fear. This also reinforces that effort matters more than perfection, and can strengthen their confidence in handling setbacks.



Self-regulation breaks

Encourage your child to take short breaks during moments of intense emotion to help them regain composure and calm their mind. One of the most powerful ways to reinforce this is by modelling it yourself - showing them that it's okay to pause, take a breath, and reset. Try saying: 'I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before we figure this out together.' Or 'Let's step outside for a minute and get some fresh air - sometimes a little space helps us think more clearly.' When children see you using these strategies, they learn that emotions aren't something to fear, but something they can manage with the right tools.

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Sensory tools

Depending on your child's needs, consider using tactile tools like fidget toys or visual aids such as calming images to help shift their emotional state and ease anxious thoughts or worries. Pay attention to what works best for your child - some kids respond well to squeezing a stress ball or running their hands through kinetic sand, while others might find comfort in listening to soft music or focusing on a slow, rhythmic movement like tracing their finger along a smooth surface. You can also create a simple 'calm-down kit' with their favourite sensory items, ready to use when they start feeling anxious. Try saying: 'I can see you're feeling a bit overwhelmed, would you like to try your fidget toy or take a few deep breaths together?' Offering choices empowers them to find what helps them self-soothe in the moment.

If anxiety is significantly impacting your child causing prolonged fear, distress, or avoidance in their daily life, it's important to reach out to a health professional for further support.

*A special thanks to Dr Jodie Lowinger for her collaboration on these resources.
Dr Lowinger is a clinical psychologist, high-performance coach, and the founder of The Anxiety Clinic.
For more information about anxiety and how to support your child, visit drjodie.com.au.*

Please note: This resource has been developed in collaboration with Dr Jodie Lowinger and is intended for general information purposes only. It's not a substitute for professional advice. Gotcha4Life does not offer counselling or crisis support.

If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing, please speak with your GP or a qualified health professional. You can also explore a range of free, trusted supports and information at gotcha4life.org/help-resources. For direct support, Kids Helpline offers free, confidential counselling for young people aged 5 to 25. Call 1800 55 1800 or visit kidshelpline.com.au.

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