

How Parents Can Deal with Anxiety

1. Become a feelings detective.

Ask, "What is my child really feeling?"
"What I am feeling?"

2. Accept the feelings.

Instead of "you'll be fine," you might say, "You look worried. Are you okay?"
Instead of "I'm fine!", you might say, "It's reasonable that I feel nervous or scared. My past experiences are influencing those feelings."

3. Make the mind-body connection.

In calmer moments with your child, ask "How does your body feel when you feel worried or anxious?" (For every person, their physical experience of anxiety may be different.)

4. Reappraise.

Ask, "How can I learn from this? Is there a positive goal I can set in this situation?" (This can work but not always!)

5. Seek information. Learn!

Lessen the uncertainty. Learn about your child's development to understand learning challenges, whether physical, academic, social or emotional. And seek out information as a family. If you fear other people, reach out to begin to build trusting relationships.

6. Stay on your own mat.

Ask, "What should I control- my own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?" "What is my child developmentally ready to try/control?" Allow for risk and trust your child's ability to solve her own problems with your loving support.

7. Use mindfulness strategies.

Stop and practice deep breathing whenever you feel anxious. Practice with your child. Go outside, notice nature, breath fresh air.

8. Stop rumination.

If you catch yourself going over worries more than once, say out loud "Stop!" Then, try one of these strategies.

9. Practice and plan.

Kids need practice with many coping strategies so they are ready when they are anxious and you are not there to guide them. "What did you do when you felt nervous, Dad?" Make talking about coping strategies a regular part of your family conversations.

10. Analyze your daily dose.

How much negativity are you taking in through daily news consumption? This can produce anxiety and reduce your patience. Take note of how it effects you and adjust accordingly.

11. Practice Gratitude.

Fear and gratitude cannot co-exist. How do you talk daily about your appreciation of one another and for your good life?



confident parents
confident kids