



COPING WITH CHILDHOOD ANXIETY:

Small People, Big Feelings



Anxiety impacts people of all ages. The way children experience anxiety may differ from adults, particularly because they may not understand what that “pit in your stomach” feeling means. Therefore, be sure to look out for common signs of anxiety in children:

Throwing tantrums at school drop off

Difficulty getting along with friends and loved ones

Experiencing physical symptoms, like stomachaches or fatigue

Refusing to sleep alone

Avoiding normal activities

The beginning of the school year may be filled with anxiety, in some cases this is temporary. Anxiety that extends into the school year may be a sign of something more serious, like bullying, peer pressure, or trauma. Make sure you create a safe space for your child to express themselves and share the source of their anxiety. If that’s not helping, consult a mental health professional to help identify the root cause of your child’s anxiety.



You can find a mental health care provider through [ComPsych Employee Assistance Program](#).

A therapist can help you learn how to support your child through their anxiety and help your child understand their complex feelings.



FOLLOW THE MOUSE:

We’ve hyperlinked resources you may want to access. Just hover and click!

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A HEALTHY BODY MAKES FOR A HEALTHY MIND

Have you ever heard of the mind-body connection? It describes the relationship between physical, mental, and emotional health. The idea is that when your physical health suffers, so does your mental and emotional health—and vice versa! If you nurture and protect your physical health, that can positively influence your mental and emotional health, too.

Maintaining a positive mindset is critical for both your well-being and that of your child's. Never lose hope, there's plenty of resources to help your child work through anxiety and other mental and emotional health challenges. Consider implementing the following strategies to leverage the mind-body connection:

- **Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness describes activities that help you focus on being present in the moment. It's a tried-and-true strategy for managing anxiety at any age. Teach your child to practice mindfulness with one or more of these exercises.
 - Walk in nature** while paying attention to each step, sound, smell, and feeling you experience. Focus on the heat of the sun's rays on your skin, the song of the birds nearby, or the trickle of a nearby stream
 - Take a few deep breaths** while taking note of the way you feel. You may feel your heart rate slow and the physical symptoms of anxiety decrease
 - Meditate**, sit in a quiet room, close your eyes, and repeat a mantra that means a lot to you. You can also play nature's sounds, sit in silence, or hum
- **Move your body.** Exercise produces endorphins, known as feel-good neurotransmitters. They promote positive feelings that can help ease anxiety and depression. Exercising doesn't have to mean taking a trip to the gym. Instead, you and your child can dance, play at the park, or even play sports.
- **Spend time with loved ones.** Having a laugh with the ones who mean most to you and your child can help lift your spirits. Nourishing social ties and building a support system can improve mental health and instill a greater sense of purpose, both of which can ease feelings of anxiety for you and your child.

Figure out which of these strategies works best for addressing anxiety and other mental health challenges your child may experience.

Partner with your child's physician if you have questions about anxiety or other mental health concerns. If they do not have a PCP, you may call the Health Advocate number on your BCBSIL member ID card or [log on to Blue Access for MembersSM \(BAMSM\) bcbsil.com](#) and use the Provider Finder. This fast, easy-to-use tool improves members' experience when searching for in-network healthcare providers.



SOURCES: [Harvard.edu](#), [HopkinsMedicine.org](#), [MayoClinic.org](#)