How can I help my child manage school anxiety?

Children may find it hard to focus on or even [go to school](https://www.youtube.com/embed/d4wy6SKtZy8) when they're feeling worried. If your child is having trouble in school, try these ways to help.

* **Gently but firmly** tell your child why it's important to [go to school](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/School-Attendance-Truancy-Chronic-Absenteeism.aspx).
* **Talk with your child's teachers and the guidance counselor** about what to do if your child asks to go home from school early.
* **If you think your child may be upset by family stress or pressure to do well in school**, let them know they are doing a good job and you're proud of them.
* **Help your child set realistic goals for school.**If they set goals that are too hard to meet, they may feel worse about themselves.
* **Remind your child that they can take steps to control their worries.** For example, they can think about what to do ahead of time to handle a stressful situation.
* **Reward your child's brave behaviors at school.** Spending time doing fun activities with a parent is a very powerful reward.

Remember, you know your child best.

Whether it's at school or the doctor's office, you are your child's biggest advocate. Don't hesitate to speak up on behalf of your child.

Help your child learn to manage fears

When your child is calm, start a conversation about things they can do to manage fears and worries when they happen. For example, let them know that they can

* **Practice deep breathing**and muscle relaxation.
* **Use positive self-talk** (for example, "I can try this" instead of "I can't do this").
* **Think of a safe place**, such as their bedroom or favorite place outdoors.
* **Gradually facing fears.** Consider gradually exposing your child to feared objects or activities.
* **Praise and reward brave behavio**r: the goal is to cope, not avoid.

**Source**

Adapted from Addressing Mental Health Concerns in Pediatrics: A Practical Resource Toolkit for Clinicians, 2nd edition (Copyright © 2021 American Academy of Pediatrics)