

Clenching fists or teeth

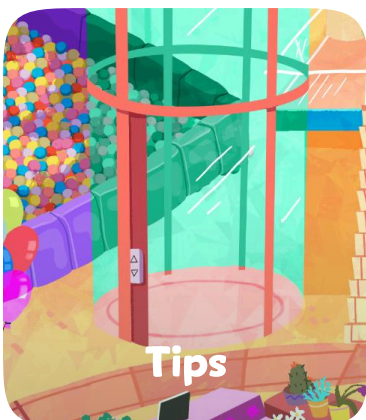
Pacing back and forth or swaying

Speaking faster than usual

Making excuses to avoid certain situations

Hugging more often or staying close to a parent

These signals are like warning lights in a car - they indicate that something needs our attention, but they don't mean there's a breakdown.



Instead of saying:

- ✗ Don't worry about it
- ✗ Pull yourself together
- ✗ It's not a big deal

Try:

- ✓ I'm here for you
- ✓ What can I do to help you?
- ✓ It's natural to feel anxious



Helping Your Child Hold On to Calm – How to Support a Child When They Feel Anxious

Every child experiences anxiety differently – through their body, emotions, or behavior. Here are some practical ways to help your little one become more comfortable with this challenging emotion.



Anxiety resembles exploring a large, crowded shopping mall – sometimes calm, sometimes filled with intense stimuli. It can suddenly appear in a child's life, for example, before a test or in new company. The body sends signals: "butterflies in the stomach," a racing heartbeat, sweaty palms.

Every child reacts differently: some seek contact with a caregiver, while others withdraw. These signals are like maps – they indicate that something needs attention, but they are not a problem in themselves.

It is crucial to teach the child that anxiety is a natural emotion that can be tamed. It's important to show coping strategies – breathing exercises, establishing safe zones, small rituals that build courage.

The key is not to eliminate anxiety, but to teach the child how to navigate their emotional "shopping mall" with increasing confidence.

In the Maze of a Child's Anxiety



A child's anxiety can be compared to finding yourself in a crowded shopping mall—you don't always know your way around, and the hallways can seem huge and full of stimulation. Each experience is different—sometimes the child stumbles upon familiar places where they feel safe, and other times they enter new, unfamiliar areas that stir uncertainty. They may feel lost, yet it's these very situations that teach them how to cope when anxiety arises.



1 The first day of school

When a child digs in their heels and doesn't want to go to school, instead of saying "There's nothing to be afraid of," try: "I understand that you feel uncertain in a new place. What worries you the most? Maybe we can come up with something together that will help you feel more confident? Remember, you can always call, and I'll be waiting after class."

4 Visit to the doctor

When a child is afraid of an examination, instead of saying "It doesn't hurt," say: "I know that a visit to the doctor can be stressful. I'll tell you what will happen step by step. You can hold my hand, and afterward, we'll go for ice cream. Do you want to bring your favorite teddy bear? We can also play doctor together so you know what to expect."

2 Performance on stage

When a child panics before a school performance, avoid saying "You'll be fine." Instead, say: "Feeling nervous before a performance is natural; even adult actors feel it. Maybe we can practice your performance together? Show me what you already know, and I'll be your first audience. You can always look at me during your performance."

5 Test at school

When feeling anxious before a test, avoid saying "But you studied." It's better to say: "It's normal to feel stressed before a test. You've prepared as best as you could. Remember the deep breaths we practiced. If something is difficult, move on and come back to it later. We can also practice relaxation techniques together."

3 Making new friends

If a child is afraid of meeting new friends, don't say "Everyone is nice." Instead, try: "Meeting new people can be tough. Maybe we can start with one person? I saw that Zosia also likes dinosaur books. Would you like me to be with you when you talk to her?"

6 Separation from parents

When a child panics at separation, don't say "I'll be back soon." Instead, try: "I know it's hard for you when I leave. Let's establish our special goodbye ritual. Maybe we can come up with a secret sign or password? You can also keep a photo with you that we choose together. When I return, you can tell me all about it."

A Lesson in Staying Calm Through Big Feeling

Remember, a child does not "get rid of" anxiety – they learn to live with it and harness its energy. It's like exploring a new center – at first, there's uncertainty and confusion, but over time, more joy in discovering new places.

The key is not to eliminate anxiety, but to learn how to cope with it – sometimes calmly, sometimes with a racing heart, but always moving forward. Your role is to be like a landmark in this crowded place – a stable support that shows the way to calm.

