

# Helping your child manage anxiety



**erikson**  
center for children and families

- Anxiety is a normal part of life
- We teach our children to manage anxiety, not avoid it
- We protect our children from **unnecessary** anxiety like scary movies or TV news
- When we can manage our own anxiety, we can better help our children with theirs

## Top Ten Tips

1. Predictable but flexible routines help your child feel that things are safe, including safe to try new things.
2. Understand your child's feelings first, before trying to reassure them.
3. Never dismiss your child's worries and feelings. It can make him or her feel alone. Take their fears seriously.
4. Help your child anticipate challenging situations beforehand. Come up with specific ways to manage fear.
5. Never trick your child by telling them something won't be difficult, when you know it really will be.
6. Don't pressure your child to try things they are afraid of. Instead, confidently encourage your child to think about small steps they could try.
7. Get your child involved in fun physical activities. This helps their sense of accomplishment and self-esteem, and can boost their mood.
8. Find ways to slow down your family's busy schedule. Children need down time to decompress, have fun, and connect with their family.
9. Set clear behavior rules and limits so your child will know what is expected. Follow up with consistent consequences if your child misbehaves, but don't let anger or disappointment get the best of you.
10. Know your own anxieties before you try to help your child. Anxiety is infectious, but so is calm.

If, despite your best efforts, your child does not seem to be able to overcome fears or a general state of anxiety or worry, don't delay seeking professional help.