



February 2026

Dear Families,

The school year is now in full swing and we hope it is a great year so far!

Anxiety is one of the most common challenges among children and adolescents, affecting students across all grade levels. In this month's newsletter, you'll find information and tips on how to support your student if they experience anxiety, specifically related to school.

What is School Anxiety?

School anxiety can involve ongoing worries related to schoolwork, social situations, separation from caregivers, or fear of making mistakes. Anxiety is not a choice and it's not a discipline issue. <https://childmind.org>

Common signs may include:

- Stomachaches or headaches
- Emotional outbursts, withdrawal, or shutdowns
- Avoidance of school or specific classes
- Perfectionism or intense fear of failure
- Trouble sleeping before school days
- Poor concentration

What Can Contribute to School Anxiety?

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- Academic pressure or testing demands
 - Social challenges or bullying
 - Life changes such as moves, illness, or family stress
 - Past negative school experiences
 - Sensory overload or difficulty with transitions

School Anxiety Can Present Differently Depending on a Student's Developmental Stage: <https://adaa.org>

- Ages 5-8: clinginess, tearfulness, physical complaints
- Ages 9-12: avoidant, irritability, frequent reassurance seeking
- Ages 13-18: procrastination, sleep difficulties, negative self talk, withdrawal

How to Help Your Child Experiencing Anxiety: <https://health.choc.org>

- Help kids recognize their anxiety
 - Children and teens often don't know they are anxious. Help them learn how their body responds to feeling worried or fearful; talk through their emotional and physical feelings with them so they can better identify it when it happens again.
- Listen and show support
 - Encourage your child to open up about any fears and worries they have. Even if their fears seem irrational or exaggerated, let them know you care and think that what they feel is important.
- Help your child identify and practice coping skills
 - Examples: mindfulness, deep breathing, muscle relaxation
- Set consistent routines and expectations and discuss them with your child to create a sense of structure and security
- Encourage small, manageable steps, rather than avoidance
- identify trusted adults students can check in with at school
- Find treatment for your child
 - If worry is getting in the way of normal, daily activities, your child may benefit from seeing a counselor.

Recommended books and resources: <https://health.choc.org>

- Wherever You'll Be by Ariella Prince Guttman
- Hand to Hold by JJ Heller
- Llama Llama Misses Mama by Anna Dewdney
- The Yes Brain: How to Cultivate Courage, Curiosity, and Resilience in Your Child by Daniel J. Siegel, Tina Payne Bryson
- Parenting Your Anxious Child with Mindfulness and Acceptance: A Powerful New Approach to Overcoming Fear, Panic, and Worry Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy by Christopher McCurry, Steven C. Hayes
- The Joy of Parenting: An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Guide to Effective Parenting in the Early Years Paperback by Lisa W. Coyne, Amy R. Murrell

Test Anxiety:

Many students experience a specific type of school anxiety related to quizzes, exams, or standardized testing. Testing anxiety does not reflect a student's intelligence or ability, it reflects stress.

Common signs may include:

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-test-anxiety>

- Blank mind or difficulty recalling information during tests
- Physical symptoms, such as nausea, headache, or rapid heartbeat
- Perfectionism or fear of making mistakes
- Avoidance of tests or school on testing days
- Strong emotional reactions before or after assessments

Help Your Child Prepare: <https://anxietyfreechild.com>

- Breaking large tests into smaller sections when possible
- Work on maintaining focus
 - Remind your child to focus solely on the test and not to pay attention to any distractions in the classroom
- Writing out worries prior to test
 - Encourage your child to write their anxieties on paper, which has been correlated to help improve test scores
- Practice relaxation exercises

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- Deep breathing, guided imagery, meditation
 - Change your child's mindset about stress
 - Focus on growth mindset

Recommended Resources:

- [Click here for an article from Child Mind Institute: Tips for Beating Test Anxiety](#)
- Book: The Anti-Test Anxiety Society: Help Worried Students Prepare for Tests by Julia Cook
- [Click here for a short video: 5 Tips for Coping with Test Anxiety for Kids](#)

Have a wonderful February!

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