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5 Tips to Reduce Your Child's Stress and Anxiety

Anxiety symptoms are common in children and adolescents, with 10-20% of school-aged children experiencing anxiety symptoms. An even larger number of children experience stress that does not qualify as an anxiety disorder. So how can you help to reduce your child's anxiety and stress?

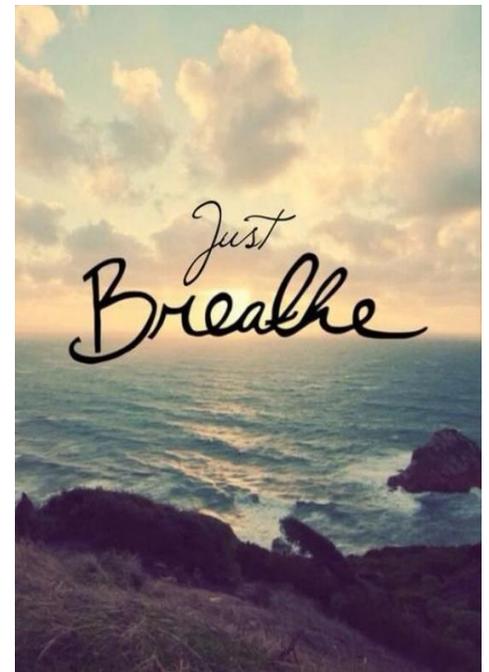
1. Tell your child that it is okay to be imperfect. Often we feel that it is necessary for our children to succeed in sports, school, and performance situations. But sometimes we forget that kids need to be kids. It is important to encourage your child to work hard but equally important to accept and embrace your child's mistakes and imperfections.

2. Model approach behavior, self-care, and positive thinking. If you take care of yourself and schedule time for your own needs, your child will learn that self-care is an important part of life. If you face your fears, so will your child. If you look for the positive in situations, so will your child.

3. Encourage your child to express his/her anxiety. If your child says that he or she is worried or scared, don't say "No you're not!" or "You're fine." Instead, validate your child's experience by saying things like "Yes, you seem scared. What are you worried about?" Then have a discussion about your child's emotions and fears.

4. Help your child to problem solve. Once you have validated your child's emotions and demonstrated that you understand your child's experience help him/her to problem solve. This does not mean solving the problem for your child: It means helping your child to identify possible solutions to the problem. If they are not able to on their own, offer some potential solutions for your child and ask your child to choose the solution that he or she thinks would work best.

5. Practice relaxation exercises with your child. Try basic relaxation exercises to help your child to reduce their stress and anxiety. Have your child take a few slow, deep breaths (you can do this with them). You could also try asking your child to imagine they are somewhere relaxing. Ask your child to close his/her eyes and imagine the sounds, smells, and sensations associated with the image.



Modified from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-worry-mom/201302/12-tips-reduce-your-childs-stress-and-anxiety>

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