

Activities to Help Children with Anxiety

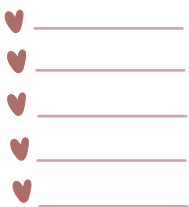
When children experience anxious thoughts or feelings, this can be overwhelming and scary at times because they are not sure what is going on in their bodies, and they don't have the vocabulary to describe what is happening.. They may feel nervous about going to school, worried about not getting picked up, or anxious about fitting in with new friends. Symptoms they may exhibit in these situations could be: headaches, stomachaches, rapid heart beat, feeling breathless, changes in mood, social withdrawal, or difficulty sleeping. The following activities are things you can do together at home to begin teaching them how to regulate these big emotions. For more information go to: <https://childmind.org/topics/anxiety/>



Blowing Bubbles: Use this activity to help children learn how to take good, deep breaths when they feel their heart beating fast and short of breath. Experiment blowing bubbles rapidly and see what happens to them; do they burst or stay on the wand? Then, practice taking slow, deep breaths to discover what happens to the bubble. Allow the children to see how big the bubble can grow and stay on the wand.



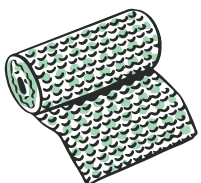
Senses Game: Go outside for some fun with your senses! Take your shoes off, lay in the grass, or sit in a chair. Helping your children use their senses, let them identify one thing they can hear, see, taste, touch, smell. This activity will help them practice grounding themselves into the present moment when their thoughts want to wander into the future of things out of their control.



Gratitude List: Gratitude is a natural, built-in anxiety blocker. Our brains cannot feel anxious and thankful at the same time. You can use notebook paper, construction paper, or a family journal for this activity. Every morning, work on identifying three things they are thankful for. For example: a favorite a cuddle, person, activity, food item, etc. During your nighttime routine, do the same thing. After one week, see what your list looks like. Repeat regularly.



Drawing: This is a fun and easy way to calm an anxious brain. Thoughts can be repetitive and easy to ruminate in. Drawing or painting can help break your child out of this loop. Doodling in this way will help stimulate their brain and get their creative juices flowing when they feel stuck in a thought.



Bubble Wrap Fun! The next time you have a package delivered, save the bubble wrap. Use this item for a loud but stimulating sensory activity. Have your child take off their shoes and socks or grab a small piece in their hands and pop away! This will help relax the tension in their muscles and release a satisfying amount of dopamine.