

Helping Students with Anxiety Succeed In School

Hosted by:



Beyond BookSmart

Executive Function Coaching Specialists since 2006

TOP 3 TIPS FROM
OUR PANELISTS
PLUS THEIR
RECOMMENDED
RESOURCES



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Remind parents, "Don't try to run the race for them and don't remove the hurdles, instead let them run and teach them to jump!" We don't want to avoid or alleviate anxiety-provoking experiences for children, we want them to develop the skills to work through them.

When working with schools, make sure that you are setting up supports that will still facilitate challenges and emphasize use of skills for *navigation* NOT supports that accommodate the anxiety and are done in the service of avoidance and providing certainty. In navigating challenges, kids are given the opportunity to experience pride and growth, which are far more motivating than "comfortability" and yield increased confidence and distress tolerance.

Help kids to become their own anxiety detective by exploring and identifying the signs they feel in their body, thoughts they hear in their head and the behaviors/actions they notice themselves having when they are feeling anxious.

Suggested resource: [Go Zen](#)



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For parents: Build a team of support around your child including but not limited to educators, family members, and clinicians. Ensure continuity of care by creating avenues for ongoing communication and collaboration.

Help teach students ways to self-advocate within the home and classroom environment. By understanding specific triggers, a child can utilize appropriate coping strategies before a situation becomes too overwhelming to manage.

A psychological/ neuropsychological evaluation can be an extremely helpful tool to support a child's specific social/emotional and academic needs. By understanding a child's individual strengths and weaknesses, we as parents and professionals can generate goals to set our children up for success across a variety of environments.

Suggested resources: [Calm](#), [Headspace](#), and [Insight Timer](#) apps



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Differential diagnosis is imperative when figuring out intervention and treatment. Once we know the source of the student's challenge, we can then determine the appropriate intervention to best meet their needs.

In utilizing neuropsychological principles and brain development, anxiety must be addressed first. Anxiety can temporarily shut off blood supply and access to the frontal lobe of the brain, where our executive functions live. Therefore, we need to address anxiety before we can address any executive functioning weakness.

Coordination of care between the student, the family, and the school is essential. By nurturing these relationships, our students can achieve the greatest success with consistency, a shared language, and a mutual understanding of how and when to apply different coping strategies.

Suggested resource: [Three Good Things: A Happiness Journal](#)



Eric Endlich, Ph.D.

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For parents: Start with listening to and acknowledging your child's feelings. Change and challenges bring uncertainty, and anxiety is a normal response. Children need to learn to tolerate uncertainty. Empower your child to problem-solve and discover inner resources. Let them know you are confident that they can learn to cope.

Remember the basics: adequate sleep, nutrition, hydration, affection, structure, nature, sunshine, exercise.

Learn controlled breathing techniques.

Suggested resources: [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)
[Breathe 2 Relax app](#)



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For parents and educators: Approach each child with empathy and an open heart and mind. We may not understand their feelings or why they are so challenged by seemingly "easy" tasks (i.e. finishing an assignment; getting to class; working with others on group projects) but we need to believe that these struggles are REAL for the child/student.

Withhold assumptions. The way we view a child and the reasons for their behaviors will influence our responses and attitudes towards them. If I assume that a student didn't turn in their big semester project because they "just don't care about my class" then I am more likely to approach that student in a punitive way. However, if I consider that the student may lack a SKILL rather than the WILL to complete the project, I am more likely to approach that child with love and support.

Asking good questions promotes trust and strengthens relationships with students. This may sound like, 'I've noticed you haven't scheduled your first lesson with Driver's Ed. Is there something getting in the way for you? Do you feel like you know how to get started?' Don't assume you know what's wrong and how to 'fix' it...instead, ask the expert: the student themselves!

Suggested resources: [Your Kid's Gonna Be Okay: Building the Executive Function Skills Your Child Needs in the Age of Attention](#)
[Take 5 \(5-Finger Breathing Technique\)](#)