

MANAGING ANXIETY

Supporting Children In an Anxious Time

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THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MANAGING YOUR CHILD'S ANXIETY

HOW TO HELP CHILDREN MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY MORE EFFECTIVELY!

DO: Express positive expectations. Let your child know you are confident that they can overcome their fears and that they are capable of managing their anxiety.

DON'T: Avoid things that make your child anxious. This may actually reinforce their anxiety and teach them avoidance as a coping skill.

DO: Respect their feelings. Listen and be empathetic to their fears to understand why they are anxious. Then encourage them to face their fears and let them know you will help them get through it.

DON'T: Ask leading questions. Instead of asking "are you anxious/scared about your test?" ask "how are you feeling about your test today?" Leading questions may unintentionally reinforce their fears.

DO: Talk things through with your child. Explain what would happen if their fears came true and have a plan so they know how to handle it. This will help reduce the anxiety of "what if?"

DO: Model healthy ways of managing anxiety. If they see you cope with anxiety calmly they have a good example of how to get through it themselves. By showing confidence in managing your own anxiety, children will project these same behaviors and feel more secure.

COVID VACCINATION ANXIETY?

FOR PARENTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING HAVING THEIR CHILDREN
VACCINATED

KEEP IN MIND THAT GETTING A VACCINATION CAN BE A SCARY THING
FOR KIDS...

READ THESE TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD OVERCOME THEIR FEAR:

BEFORE THE VACCINATION:

- Be honest and have a positive attitude. Tell them what to expect.
 - "It will hurt for a second, but it is important for your health and I know you can do it!"
- Don't ask leading questions like "are you scared?" This may make them believe that getting vaccinated is something to be afraid of.
- Make a plan! Let your child feel some control in the situation by letting them choose a video to watch during the appointment and decide on a reward they can get after.
- According to the ChildMind Institute, "when we are afraid of something, the hardest time is really before we do it." Try to avoid discussing the appointment and vaccination until it is closer to that time.

DURING THE APPOINTMENT:

- Encourage your child to take deep breaths.
- Bring an item that is comforting to them.
- Never hold them down because this creates a traumatic experience. Instead, try to get them comfortable and calm.

AFTER VACCINATION:

- Give your child some kind of reward whether it's a popsicle or a trip to the playground.
 - This reinforces bravery and also gives them something to look forward to.
- Praise them for doing well or discuss what they can do next time to make it a better experience.

“ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS WE TELL PARENTS IS THAT THEIR OWN ANXIETY IS GOING TO BE A REALLY BIG PREDICTOR OF THEIR CHILD’S ANXIETY, SO WHILE STRESS IS CONTAGIOUS, SO IS CALM.”-DR. JODY THOMAS