



Top tips to help manage worry

- Worry is normal
- We all worry, even children, and this is ok
- Listen, ask questions, empathise, don't criticise
- Use big emotions as a way to teach your child coping skills
- Find some ways to practice being calm.



Managing Children's Worries





Is worry normal?

It is completely normal for even young children to worry. We are not trying to stop children from worrying but aim to teach children to worry productively and have control over their less useful worries. Worry can be good, such as helping us pass exams. Worry is not going to cause your child much harm but it feels miserable and can take up a lot of time.

Sometimes worries can feel overwhelming but when you look at them closely they are not that bad and can be managed. This is what worry solving is; breaking problems down and working out what to do with them. Teaching children to worry solve will have a useful skill for life.

What can you do to help?

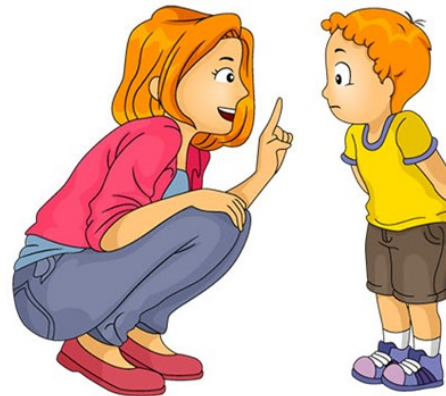
When we are supporting children with their worries the first thing we should do is listen to our children's worry and show them that we accept this is a worry for them. Then ask lots of questions. A useful framework of questions uses the acronym WIN.

W- I wonder.... I wonder if you are worried about seeing your friends again?

I- I imagine... I imagine that makes you feel frustrated.

N- I notice... I notice your face is going red and you are feeling angry.

Wrap this all up in lots of empathy for how the child is feeling.



Problem Solving

Realistic worries need problem solving. This involves scaffolding your child to find a suitable solution to the worry.

Usually, it is not enough to find a solution to the problem. Children will need a bit of help planning exactly what to do. For example, which teacher will they tell? When? What will they say? Sometimes it can be helpful to role play this with your child.

It is also often useful to remind your child of a time they have coped with this worry or a similar worry. How did they cope last time? What did they do?

There are many techniques which can help calm children when they are feeling worried, when practiced regularly these become an effective tool for children to use independently to help manage big feelings and worries.

