



Six Parenting Tips for Beating School Anxiety

Addressing anxiety in students is key to ensuring and promoting their mental wellbeing. While it's unpleasant, anxiety is not something that can be eliminated. However, with the right toolbox of skills, resources and strategies, it can be effectively managed. Yew Chung International School of Beijing's Student Counsellor, Rachel George, shares her top tips for parents to help their kids successfully cope with stress and thrive in school.

1. How to spot anxiety

Anxiety isn't always obvious and looks different in different people. Some common signs are: crying, whining, temper tantrums, withdrawal, nail biting, nervous picking, scratching or twitching, loss of appetite or insomnia. If any of these behaviours appear suddenly, it could be a sign of anxiety.

2. Tell them they're not alone

Everyone from childhood to old age experiences stress and anxiety. Sometimes the things that make us feel stressed are short-lived. Sometimes, they last months or years. If your child is feeling stressed or anxious, tell them that they're not alone.

3. Take a walk

Walking and talking is a useful way of dealing with emotional outbursts or stress that can overwhelm children. Take your child for a walk and talk about something else. Let their mind wander to a happier time or place or reminisce on good memories together. Don't talk about the stress until they've cooled off. This kind of activity also helps to build trust between parents and children.

4. Make a worry box

Sometimes children are reluctant to open

up about their feelings face to face. In my workshop I make "worry boxes" with parents. Set up one in your house and ask your family to post things in that are making them feel anxious. This process helps your child identify their stress and allows you to discuss it.

5. Make time to relax

After a busy day at school, children need time to relax and unwind. They need time to play, hang out with friends, listen to music, and watch TV. Time spent doing nothing is essential for their personal development and mental health. I understand why parents want their children to do lots of co-curricular activities, but please make sure they also have time to chill out. This will really help them cope with the pressures of school.

6. Talk, talk, talk!

As a general rule, the more parents and kids talk to each other, the better they will be able to cope with life's pressures. Be open about your own feelings. Have honest discussions as a family. Tell your child it's ok to feel down sometimes. Be there to listen.



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