



# School Anxiety in Children with ADHD: Signs and Strategies to Help

Children with ADHD struggle with executive functioning skills like planning, organizing, and time management. These challenges can lead to severe stress and anxiety when they go to school, especially during a pandemic. Children may have a hard time managing their anxiety.



## Signs of Anxiety

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, shaking, sweating, muscle tension
- Increase in sleep problems
- Increase in disruptive or oppositional behavior
- Worsening of attention problems
- Worrying about the future and school performance
- Withdrawing from school activities
- Avoiding or refusing to go to school
- Refusing to eat at school
- Refusing to use the bathroom at school
- Fear of being separated from family members

## Strategies to help children cope with anxiety



1. Acknowledge their feelings and help them see the difference between what makes them feel afraid and what is actually dangerous.
2. Teach them to talk back to anxious thoughts with more helpful thoughts, such as "I can do this."
3. Teach them to calm their minds by using techniques such as breathing slowly for ten breaths or using all five senses to imagine a happy place.
4. Address a distressing situation like the pandemic by offering comfort, providing clear guidelines about what can and cannot be done, and staying connected with friends and family.
5. Show your child how you manage anxiety. Keep your face, voice, and body calm. Be reassuring and hopeful. Children learn by observing the behaviors of those around them.
6. Encourage them to do activities they enjoy doing, especially if it includes physical activity.
7. Consider mental health treatment if their anxiety is severe.
8. Seek school accommodations if needed.