About Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal response to stress or uncertainty. Children may feel nervous before a test, new activity, separation, or unfamiliar situation.

Anxiety becomes more concerning when fears or worries are frequent, intense, difficult to manage, or begin interfering with school, sleep, relationships, activities, or daily routines.

A helpful reminder

Children do not always say, “I feel anxious.” Their anxiety may appear through behavior, avoidance, physical complaints, or repeated reassurance-seeking.

Connect With Enspire

Educational Inquiries

(215) 845-5869

Clinical Inquiries

(215) 948-3171

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Understanding Anxiety in Children

A Parent & Caregiver Guide



Anxiety can show up as worry, avoidance, physical complaints, irritability, or a strong need for reassurance.

Learn common ways anxiety may appear in children, when to seek additional support, and practical steps families can take.

EDUCATION • EVALUATION • SUPPORT

What Might Anxiety Look Like?

Parents and caregivers may notice changes or patterns involving:

- **Frequent worry**
- **Avoidance**
- **Physical complaints**
- **Sleep**
- **Irritability**
- **Reassurance-seeking**

Important

A child can be anxious even when the situation does not seem frightening to an adult. Pay attention to the child's distress and how much it affects daily life.



Common Characteristics

- Worries about many different things
- Frequently asks "what if?" questions
- Avoids school, activities, or social situations
- Complains of stomachaches or headaches
- Has difficulty sleeping or separating from caregivers
- Becomes tearful, irritable, or overwhelmed
- Needs repeated reassurance
- Has trouble concentrating when worried

Anxiety is treatable, and early support can help children build coping skills.

When Should I Seek Support?

Consider professional support when anxiety is persistent, causes significant distress, or interferes with school attendance, relationships, sleep, family routines, or activities the child wants or needs to do.

An evaluation may include:

- Parent/caregiver input
- Child interview
- School or teacher input
- Behavioral/emotional measures

What Can Parents Do?

- Listen and validate the child's feelings.
- Notice patterns and common triggers.
- Keep routines predictable when possible.
- Encourage coping without reinforcing avoidance.
- Speak with a qualified professional when anxiety persists.

How Enspire Can Help

Enspire provides psychological evaluations and outpatient behavioral health services to help families better understand emotional and behavioral needs.

Questions? Call (215) 948-3171