



COFFEE WITH MR. KRAMER AND MRS. KOERNER



**CENTERVILLE ELEMENTARY
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COPING WITH CHILDHOOD STRESS AND ANXIETY





**My child is not GIVING
me a hard time.**

**My child is
HAVING
a hard time.**

CHILDHOOD ANXIETY

- ❖ Affects 1 in 8 children (according to ADAA)
- ❖ Children who suffer from anxiety are at higher risk to perform poorly in school and miss out on important social experiences if they don't receive support
- ❖ Anxiety disorders often co-occur with depression and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

TYPES

- Separation
- School Phobia
- Change/Transitions
- Death/Grief
- Bullying/Social
- Environmental (Fire Drills, Storms, Clowns)

SOME WORRY/ANXIETY IS NORMAL


- ❖ Fear has a protective function.
- ❖ Fear and anxiety are different.
- ❖ Kids often feel a little nervous or anxious about an upcoming event- this is normal.
- ❖ **When the anxiety is strong, lasts a long time and begins to impede your child from being able to perform daily routines, that's cause for concern.**

KIDS HAVE A LOT ON THEIR PLATES THESE DAYS!

What do kids have to worry about?!

- ❖ Children are experiencing far more stress and anxiety than any previous generation
- ❖ Families face many different challenges/stressors
- ❖ Environmental Dangers/Media exposure
- ❖ Digital world/social media
- ❖ Peer relationships
- ❖ School problems

Kids are especially vulnerable to these stressors since they have less control over their lives.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS AND ANXIETY IN CHILDREN

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN

- ❖ Tense muscles, sweating, heart pounding, difficulty sitting still
- ❖ Somatic complaints- stomachache, headache
- ❖ Consistent trouble with falling asleep and/or staying asleep; nightmares
- ❖ Serious distress and panic when separated from parent or caregiver (ie, going to school, day care or other places)
- ❖ School refusal
- ❖ Losing interest in normal activities
- ❖ Intensely afraid of social or performance situations that involve unfamiliar people or being evaluated by others
- ❖ Trouble concentrating, complaining of their mind “going blank”
- ❖ Restless, jumpy and on the lookout for something bad to happen
- ❖ Feeling irritable and upset; outbursts of anger
- ❖ Feelings fatigued or out of energy to cope
- ❖ Withdrawal- avoiding places, people and situations
- ❖ Changes in school performance and poor grades
- ❖ Aggressive behavior and/or not obeying adults in charge
- ❖ Excessive worry and needing to do things perfectly



WHAT NOW?

HELPING OUR CHILDREN COPE

SELF-HELP COPING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN

- ❖ Deep breathing/Belly breathing
- ❖ Transitional object (aka, “Comfort item”)
 - ❖ Stuffed animal
 - ❖ Family photo
 - ❖ Worry stone
- ❖ Positive self-talk statements
- ❖ Calming visualizations
- ❖ Talk to the anxiety
- ❖ Worry jar or journal
- ❖ Relieving tense muscles- progressive muscle relaxation, yoga

STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR ANXIOUS CHILD

- ❖ Model self-confidence and calmness
- ❖ Show that you have confidence in your child
- ❖ Talk out their fears
- ❖ Convince your child that they don't need to be afraid
- ❖ Make your child do difficult things and face their fears
- ❖ Consider community resources

SCHOOL ANXIETY- WHEN YOUR CHILD STRUGGLES COMING TO SCHOOL

- ❖ Empower your child
- ❖ Offer them an incentive/motivator
- ❖ Point out times in which they overcame difficulties before
- ❖ Ease performance/test anxiety
- ❖ Have your child go to school

RESOURCES

- ❖ Feel free to borrow resources!
- ❖ Worry Wise Kids- <http://www.worrywisekids.org/>
 - ❖ Normal anxiety vs. red flags
 - ❖ Types of anxiety and treatments
 - ❖ Dos and Don'ts for parenting an anxious child
- ❖ Anxiety and Depression Association of America- <https://www.adaa.org>
 - ❖ Descriptions of types of childhood anxieties
 - ❖ Tips for parents and caregivers
- ❖ 49 Phrases to Calm an Anxious Child- <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/>
- ❖ Strategies for kids
 - ❖ Sesame Street: Common and Colbie Caillat -"Belly Breathe" with Elmo (on Youtube)
 - ❖ Kid's Relaxation: Progressive Muscle Relaxation exercises- <http://kidsrelaxation.com/?cat=21>