



10 Tips to Parent Your **ANXIOUS** Child



By Anne Marie Albano, PhD, author of *"You and Your Anxious Child"*, with Leslie Pepper

1. Respect and validate your child's feelings! Anxiety is a real emotion and not pleasant.
2. Teach your child deep, slow, belly breathing. This is an easy and very portable skill for self-soothing and calming.
3. Listen to your child and ask "Tell me what you are thinking?" This will help to reveal scary thoughts and scenes that build up in your child's mind.
4. Rather than swooping to reassure, ask your child "How likely is (that thing you're afraid of) to happen?" You'll be teaching him to challenge his anxious thinking.
5. Prompt your child with "Tell me some things you can do to handle this situation" and help her to brainstorm, rather than just giving her solutions. She'll feel empowered.
6. Give up the idea of "mental health days" "skip days" "sleep with mom nights" or other ways of avoiding feared situations. This just makes the anxiety stick more firmly and lead to further avoidance.
7. Encourage your child's attempts to be brave, no matter how small they may seem to you. Use labeled praise such as "I'm so proud of you for sleeping in your own bed last night!"
8. Work with your child to outline small steps leading to a bigger goal.
9. Create opportunities for your child to practice being brave and coping, and then high-five his/her efforts!
10. Recognize when you are anxious and say aloud what you can do to calm down and solve the situation. You'll be modeling coping for your child, but be mindful and don't overshare your anxiety!