



## Stress and Anxiety Warning Signs: A Parent's Guide

Life can be pretty tough and stressors like the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can make kids and adults feel even more worried or anxious. As a parent, you can pay attention to stress in your child by looking for some of the warning signs listed below.

### What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal response to stressful experiences and situations in your world. Some worry can be helpful but too much can start to get in the way. All kinds of things can make kids feel anxious including academic problems, family conflict, bullying or stressful life events.

### What does Anxiety look like?

Kids may show anxiety in lots of different ways including with their body, feelings, thoughts and behaviors. You may notice the following signs:

- Changes in breathing or heart rate, shaking, crying, headaches
- Increased worry thoughts such as:
  - I keep thinking about \_\_\_\_.
  - Is something bad going to happen?
- Reassurance seeking
  - Am I going to be okay?
- Changes in mood with increased:
  - Fear or panic
  - Frustration or irritability
  - Sadness
- Increased behavior problems
- Decreased attention and focus
- Trouble sleeping alone
- Social worries around negative judgment
  - Turning off camera for video meetings
- School refusal



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## **What do I do if I'm worried about my child's stress levels?**

For some strategies you can try at home, check out "Helping Kids Manage Stress and Anxiety: A Parent's Guide." on our website at **[www.childrensnational.org/return-to-school](http://www.childrensnational.org/return-to-school)**. If you are worried about how your child is feeling or behaving, you can seek help and support in your community by calling Children's National at 202-729-3300.