



Here are some common signs of anxiety in young children:

-  **Anger** – Hitting, biting, throwing, yelling or defiance; a “fight” response
-  **Avoidance** – Refusing to participate (even when a parent or other safe adult is around), leaving a situation early, saying they can’t do something, withdrawing, becoming quiet
-  **Physical complaints** – Stomach pains, headaches, tight muscles or just a vague sick feeling, caused by stress hormones
-  **Clingy behaviour** – Communicating distress through clinginess when they have not developed the necessary verbal skills
-  **New (“what-if”) worries** – Worrying about things like bad things happening, not doing something well, what other children think, where parents are, or getting in trouble
-  **Changes in eating habits** – Extreme pickiness, a change in appetite, or sudden rejection of favourite foods
-  **Sensitivities** – Showing an increased sensitivity to noise, startling more easily, being bothered by seams or restrictive clothes, avoiding getting hands dirty or sticky
-  **Control and rigidity** – Getting upset when routine is disrupted, needing things to be a very specific way (e.g., only using a certain cup, insisting that a sandwich be cut in a certain way)
-  **Difficulty sleeping** – Worrying about separation, monsters and bad dreams

Anxiety can sound like:



### Extra support

Anxiety can come and go, and it is normal for children to feel anxious or worried sometimes. Children with additional physical, learning, sensory or developmental needs can also experience anxiety and sometimes more so. If your child shows several signs of anxiety that interfere with daily life and last for a while, it may be helpful to look for **some extra support**.

“When children feel anxious, they often seek to control simple parts of their life that they can control.”

**Dr. Mona Delahooke,**  
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