

FACT SHEET • PRIMARY

Helping Your Child Manage Worries

Worry is a normal part of growing up, and a primary-aged child can pick up on far more than adults realise: a change at school, something overheard, an exam looming. Left unspoken, a small worry can grow simply because it has nowhere to go. Here is how to help it come out into the open, one small step at a time.



TIP 1

Ask open questions, not closed ones

"What's on your mind?" gets further than "are you okay?", which is easy to answer with a quick "fine". Ask in the car or at bedtime, when eye contact isn't required.

TIP 2

Take the worry seriously

Don't rush to say "there's nothing to worry about". To your child it's real, and being believed matters more, at first, than being reassured or talked out of it.

TIP 3

Try writing worries down

For some children, writing their worries down and putting them somewhere safe gives a worry somewhere to live outside your child's head, which can be enough to make it feel smaller.

TIP 4

Separate the worry from the facts

Gently ask what your child thinks will happen, then compare it with what's likely. Most worries turn out bigger in the imagining than in the event itself.

TIP 5

Know when to ask for help

A worry that lingers for weeks, stops sleep or eating, or shrinks your child's world is worth mentioning to their school or GP. Most settle, but some need more support.