

How to Help a Fearful or Hesitant Child

If your child avoids new things, says “I can’t” before starting, or worries about embarrassment — this guide is for you.

Resilience grows when kids practice small, safe risks.

HOW BRAVERY GROWS

1

PICK A “LEVEL 2” BRAVE STEP

Ask: “What’s something a little scary — but still doable?”

Look for signs it’s Level 2:

- Nervous but willing
- Needs support
- Not shutting down

Why this helps:

Parents often jump to Level 5 bravery, which leads to refusal.



2

BE A “WORST-CASE DETECTIVE”

Ask: “If the worst happened, what would we do?”

Then help them see:

- Most fears = awkward, not dangerous
- Feelings pass
- They can handle uncomfortable moments

Why this helps:

They learn fear ≠ danger.



3

CELEBRATE THE ATTEMPT

Say: “I’m proud of you for trying.”

Focus on effort:

- Trying
- Practicing
- Showing up

Why this helps:

Kids learn that bravery = effort, not outcome.



4

MODEL BRAVE FAILS

Tell a quick story:

“Once I tried something new and it didn’t go great...”

I felt embarrassed, but I survived.”

Key message:

Mistakes are part of learning brave things.

Why this helps:

Kids learn imperfection is safe.



WHAT TO SAY

Before they try:

Your brain has a safety alarm. It gets loud when things are new. I’m right here while you try.



After it didn’t go perfectly:

That was a brave try. Every brave try makes your brain stronger.

Big Life Journal

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Not sure if it applies to you?

Take a quick look at what's included based on your role:

 [For Schools & Educators \(PDF one-pager\)](#)

 [For Therapists & Mental Health Professionals \(PDF one-pager\)](#)

If you have any questions, email us at support@biglifejournal.com

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9-year-old listener

“They were laughing and repeating the lines.”

A parent

What your child grows into:

- ✓ Trying even when it's hard
- ✓ Including the kid on the outside
- ✓ Being kind to their own mistakes
- ✓ Feeling brave to ask for help
- ✓ Accepting all their emotions



MEET

PIP & NOVA

They travel to Earth for one mission:
understanding humans.

In each episode, your child becomes an Agent — joining Pip and Nova to decode friendship, feelings, mistakes, and the everyday hard stuff.



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- Bite-sized activities to build life skills
- 1-1 coaching to help you stay calm when they aren't
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Explore the parent's path

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