

The Anxietyproject



3 simple steps Parents and Carers can take to support The Anxiety Project



It's time to develop childhood resilience and we're here to help.

You're probably already aware that today's Australian children are more anxious in comparison to previous generations.

Many people think that children have become more anxious as a result of the pandemic, however, child anxiety has been problematic for over a decade. The good news is, most childhood anxiety is treatable not only by psychologists, but by significant adults in their lives like parents and teachers.

While The Anxiety Project being conducted in NSW primary schools can't fix all child anxiety it does provide strategies for the key adults to use to stop anxiety from becoming worse.



"A child's anxiety will not usually fix itself. Unless something changes, it will tend to worsen. However, the good news is that seemingly-modest interventions delivered by significant adults can make a difference and turn that progression around."



Michael Hawton MAPS
Psychologist

Before we get to the 3 steps, here are some facts about childhood anxiety:

- Most anxiety is learned. Yes, you read that right; it's mostly a set of learned habits. The good news about anything that is learned is that these habits can be changed.
- Children can learn 'return-to-calm' skills that can help them overcome their anxiety. While this is not often taught, children equipped with these well-researched skills can build resilience under their own steam.
- Children can be taught how to be the 'boss' of their anxiety and with each successful attempt at doing this, they can become emotionally stronger and manage their anxiousness.
- A child's anxiety will tend to get worse across over time, if it's not attended to early.
- Mentors, teachers and parents are important trainers of children's emotional wellbeing, and it is not as hard as you think to change the trajectory of childhood anxiety.



Step 1:

What do you want for the 'future' child you're raising?

When parents are asked this question, they'll often say: "I just want him or her to be 'happy'". But, if they're asked to dig a bit deeper, they will say that they want their child to be:

- Resilient
- A good problem solver
- Emotionally strong
- Someone with friends and to do well in life.

Now, have a think about this yourself. In the box below, write down what you would wish for your child as they mature.

Please don't skip this step, as visualising what you have in mind for your child's future will help you focus on what you can do to contribute to this outcome.



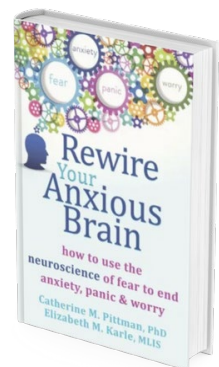
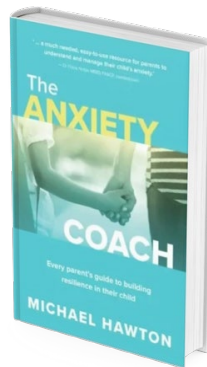
Step 2:

Be an active partner with your school

Here are some ways that you can support your school to build your child's resilience.

Educate yourself by:

- Completing The Anxiety Coach child development course, by attending 3 after-school sessions hosted by your school.
- Reading one or both of these books: The Anxiety Coach – every parent's guide to building resilience in their child, 2023, by Australian psychologist, Michael Hawton or Rewire your Anxious Brain by Catherine Pittman and Elizabeth Karle.



You can buy these books here:
<https://www.parentshop.com.au/shop>
or at your local bookshop.

Step 3:

Take a moment to recognise that the teachers at your school are invested in your child doing their best and want them to do well in life.

Support your school's efforts to help your child's resilience.

- Talk with your school's Implementation Coach about The Anxiety Project at your school.

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- Support the teachers' efforts to help your child overcome anxious moments.

- Avoid prematurely jumping in to fix school-based problems that are within your child's ability to solve.
- Get specialist help if your child's anxiety worsens.

Through The Anxiety Project, all the staff in your school are trained to deal with children who have mild-to-moderate level anxiety. If your children's anxiety worsens or is interfering with day-to-day activities, talk to your GP about a referral to a psychologist. Here is a referral hub: <https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

More resources to support parents are available on this website.



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