

# HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE ANXIETY & STRESS

*Kids have a lot to deal with these days – from schoolwork, friendships and busy extracurricular schedules to peer pressure, bullying and stressful world events. When your child feels overwhelmed and anxious, support them and teach them ways to manage stress that they can use as they grow.*

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## CREATING A HEALTHIER KENTUCKY

At UK HealthCare, we're leading the way to help all Kentuckians live their healthiest lives.

### Warning signs

- Changes in eating patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Challenges with schoolwork
- Challenges with friends or peers
- Daily worries
- Panic attacks
- Worsening of chronic health problems

### What to do

- **Talk it out.** Discuss your child's feelings and what they're stressed about. Reassure them that being stressed is normal and that it's OK to be imperfect.

- **Block off time for fun.** With busy schedules, kids sometimes don't have time to just be kids. Make time for fun, whether it's a board game or a bike ride.
- **Stick to a sleep schedule.** Sleep helps maintain good physical and mental health. Limit screen time at night and aim for a regular bedtime.
- **Model calm behavior.** Be aware of how you react to stressful situations. Talk to your child about how you de-stress and encourage them to find a helpful activity to do when they're stressed.

If you, your child, or someone you know are thinking about suicide or self-harm, call or text 988, the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.



### When to seek help

If you are worried about your child's anxiety or stress, talk with their pediatrician for guidance. If your child's stress or anxiety is interfering with their life (for example, school, ability to enjoy friends or family or their activities), reach out to your child's doctor, school counselor or find a mental health professional for an evaluation.



### Calming strategy

**Diaphragmatic breathing:** Practice inhaling for four seconds, holding breath for four seconds, and exhaling for four seconds with your child. Deep-breathing exercises help counteract your body's natural fight or flight instincts by slowing your heartbeat to help your body relax.