

3 Alternative Methods For Reducing Your Child's Anxiety

By: Providence Health Team

As parents, you hope that your child's classroom will be a place that allows kids to develop their mind, build relationships and explore the world around them. That's why it's so disheartening to see your child deal with anxiety in school. Anxiety can manifest in many forms such as fear of playing with other children or **unusual anger** and aggression. You may even notice that your child has become more dependent than usual and may even start crying when left alone. When it comes to supporting an anxious child, there are several options. You can always speak to a physician about possible causes and remedies, or research natural supplements that can temporarily quell the symptoms. However, if you're looking for alternative options, here are some ideas that may help:

1. **Yoga and meditation.** These practices are becoming increasingly popular in Western culture and are proven to reduce stress and calm the nervous system. They work by slowing down breathing, activating a restful state. When done correctly, your child's heart rate and blood pressure will lower and s/he will feel a **sense of peace**. While yoga requires some movement that aligns with breathing, meditation is usually still and requires some patience to clear the mind. Try practicing yoga with your child and choose fun, easy poses to get started. If you opt for meditation, enlist the help of soothing music to guide you through.
2. **Aromatherapy.** If you haven't tried aromatherapy before, you might start with a massage or a bath that incorporates aromatic, plant-derived **essential oils**. Did you know that some essential oils can have a calming effect? When smelled, your scent receptors send chemical messages to the part of your brain that controls emotion. Depending on the essential oil, your child may experience different effects. For example, lavender oil is the most common oil and can help promote better sleep, calm irritability and soothe a nervous stomach. Another great oil for anxiety is chamomile. Just like the tea, the oil version can relieve stress, improve digestion and calm an anxious mind.
3. **Art therapy.** This stress-busting activity allows children to shift the focus away from their anxiety into a creative outlet. When your child's attention moves away from frustrations and fears, the nervous system will begin to regulate. Art therapy creates mindfulness and offers a way for children to express themselves non-verbally. It can create a sense of distance from whatever is worrying them and offer them a chance to see a situation from a different perspective. Some forms of art therapy can include coloring, painting or scrapbooking.

Anxiety can sometimes feel like an insurmountable challenge, but bear in mind there are numerous ways to help your child regain a sense of calm so s/he can approach the school day with confidence. Once you've given these alternative options a chance, be sure to observe any difference in your child's level of anxiety.

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