



Coping Ahead: How to Manage the Anxiety of Starting Program

DO: 

- **DO** take care of yourself, seek your own support, and model healthy choices for your child
- **DO** model skills use for your child
- **DO** work together with your own supports to be sure your goals and messages to your child align
- **DO** mentally prepare yourself- your child may become angry and initially get worse when you set new limits in your home, prepare yourself knowing this is part of the process
- **DO** remain consistent in your message and expectations to the child
- **DO** disengage with your child when either your or his/her mood rating is high
- **DO** allow your child time and space
- **DO** remind yourself that anxiety is not dangerous, we can follow through on life's expectations **AND** be anxious at the same time
- **DO** remind yourself that you can be empathetic **AND** firm, you can be loving **AND** still hold boundaries for your child

DON'T: 

- **DON'T** allow your child to avoid something uncomfortable- pushing your child to follow through increases their resilience and sends the message "You can do this. You are strong enough to tolerate this."
- **DON'T** allow your child to negotiate, stick to the plan
- **DON'T** share your own anxieties or frustrations with your child
- **DON'T** argue with your spouse/partner/child's parent in front of or near your child
- **DON'T** be afraid of setbacks- expect setbacks and use them as teachable moments to learn something new about yourself or your child