

Coping Ahead: How to Manage the Anxiety of Starting Program



Do's



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 frustrated or experience increased symptoms initially when you set new limits in your home. Prepare yourself, knowing this is part of the process of getting them the support they need

DO remain consistent in your message and expectations to the child

DO disengage from verbal conversation 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

Dont's



DON'T allow your child to avoid something uncomfortable- encouraging your child to follow through increases their resilience and sends the message "You can do this. You are strong enough to handle this."

DON'T engage in negotiation with your child, stick to the plan

DON'T share your own anxieties or frustrations with your child. Displaying a calm presence sends the message to your child that you feel confident in your ability to support them.

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