

Helping Your Child Manage Stress and Feel Ready for School



Feeling stressed or worried can make it harder for children to come to school.

One of the most helpful things families can do is support them in learning simple ways to calm themselves and cope with everyday challenges.

These don't need to be big changes – small, regular actions can make a real difference.

Stay Calm and Show How You Cope

Children learn a lot by watching the adults around them.

- Let your child see how you handle stress or frustration.
- Talking calmly about your own feelings helps them learn it's okay to feel this way.

Tip: Try saying things like, "I'm feeling stressed, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before I respond." or "That didn't go how I wanted it, but I'll try again later."

Build Simple Calming Habits

Calm moments during the day help children cope better when things feel hard.

- Deep breathing (e.g. 'smell the flower, blow out the candle').
- Gentle stretching (tense then release each part of the body).
- Mindful activities like colouring, listening to music, stretching or slow walks.

Tip: Practise these when your child is calm, not just when they're upset.

Talk Openly About Feelings

Helping children name their feelings makes them easier to manage.

- Let them know it's okay to feel nervous, worried or frustrated.
- Use everyday moments to talk about emotions.

Tip: Books, TV programmes or real-life situations can help start these conversations.

Support Problem Solving

Encourage your child to think through challenges rather than fixing everything for them. Use these simple steps:

- What's the problem?
- What solutions could we try?
- What might happen with each one?
- Let's choose one and try it together.



Tip: Praise effort and trying, even if things don't work perfectly.

Give Them Tools to Cope

Some children find it helpful to have a few go to ideas when they feel stressed. This could be:

- Drawing or writing
- Listening to music
- Breathing exercises
- Talking to a trusted adult

Tip: Let your child choose what goes on their list – feeling in control helps.

Reassure Them That Struggling Is Okay

Making mistakes and feeling strong emotions is part of growing up.

- Let your child know it's okay to find things hard.
- Focus on learning and moving forward together.
- Useful phrases to validate and guide – avoid overusing “don't worry” or “you're fine”:
 - “I was embarrassed when I forgot that meeting, but I learned from it.”
 - “Crying is a way to release sadness. It's OK to cry sometimes.”



Talk Regularly

Use everyday moments – meals, car journeys or bedtime – to check in. Simple questions can help:

- “What went well today?”
- “Was anything hard today? What helped you get through it?”



Working Together

Helping children manage stress builds confidence, resilience and emotional wellbeing. When children feel calmer and more supported, coming to school becomes easier.

If stress or worries are affecting your child's attendance, please talk to us. We are here to help and work alongside you.

Small steps in managing stress can lead to big improvements in confidence and attendance.

Every school day matters. Together, we can help your child succeed.