



EVERY VOICE COUNTS

# EVERY DAY COUNTS

## ANXIETY ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL

Going to school is usually an exciting and enjoyable event for children and adolescents. However most children are occasionally reluctant to go to school or have some anxiety about activities like school camp; it is also normal that at some stage in life most of us will feel anxious when faced with a difficult situation.

Anxiety becomes a problem when it is persistent and prevents a person from enjoying normal life experiences for a long period of time.

You can help your child to cope with anxiety in effective ways and, in doing so, help them develop self-confidence and resilience.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD HAS ANXIETY?

Signs of anxiety include:

- Having lots of worries and a strong need for reassurance

- Psychosomatic symptoms which occur before school (e.g. nausea, stomach aches, headaches or shortness of breath). These symptoms will reduce when the threat (fear of going to school) is removed.



## EVERYONE HAS CONCERNS

**Remain calm:** you will be better placed to make them feel more confident. Try not to let your child see that you are worried or frustrated

**Listen to your child:** encourage him/her to share their feelings and fears

**Don't dismiss your child's feelings:** everyone feels afraid sometimes and your child might perceive this as you not understanding or not caring about their concerns

**Talk it through:** discuss various scenarios, possible outcomes and ways to handle situations to help your child develop problem solving strategies

**Let them have a go:** avoid taking over or giving your child the impression you will fight their battles for them. Some children with anxiety are happy for others to do things for them and if you take over, it might stop them learning how to cope for themselves. It also reinforces a perception that they are helpless and that someone will rescue them

**Remind your child:** everyone makes mistakes and that this is where the best learning comes from

**Be punctual:** Avoid being late when picking up or dropping

