

What to Say to A Child with Social Anxiety



01

Validate Your Child's Feelings

Say: "I see you're feeling nervous about speaking in class. It's okay to feel that way."

02

Teach Relaxation Techniques

Say: "Learning relaxation techniques will help you keep calm when you are afraid or worried. Let's practice this every day."



03

Model Confidence

Say: "I see you're feeling nervous about speaking in class. It's okay to feel that way. Sometimes I feel nervous and worried and here's what I do."

04

Stress Independence

Say: "It's important to do things by yourself. Let's make a list of things you can do it yourself, and try to do something new every week."





05

Encourage Gradual Increases in Social Interaction

Say: "Let's make a plan to help you feel more comfortable talking in class. We'll break it down into small steps which will make it much easier."

06

Role-Play Solutions

Say: "Let's play a game where we practice how you can find a friend to play with at recess. You be yourself. Who should I be?"



07

Focus on Strengths

Say: "I know you don't want to make a presentation at school, but you have studied so hard you just have to tell your class what you learned."

08

Reframe Negative Thoughts

Say: "You just said that 'everyone' is going to make fun of your new glasses. But is that true? Everyone doesn't think or act the same way. And if one person says something, just ignore them!"



09

Encourage Friendships with Children Who Have Common Interests

Say: "I know it's hard for you to make friends, but let's make a list of things you are interested in and then think of kids who have the same interests."



10

When to Seek Professional Help

- When you don't see progress and your child continues to be anxious in most social situations.
- When your child complains of physical problems like stomach aches when anxious.
- When your child spends all her time alone and can't make friends.



Selected Resources

An Explanation of Social Anxiety from the Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/article/what-is-social-anxiety/>

The Importance of Making Kids Independent From Let Grow

<https://letgrow.org/>

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids
Instant Help Books (On Amazon)