

Helping Toddlers Cope with New Situations



Highlights

Many children may be sensitive or fearful in new situations.

Most children learn to cope with these feelings.

If anxiety prevents your child from participating in activities, extra support may be needed.

There are ways to help your child cope, such as teaching slow breathing and giving time to adjust.

If anxiety seriously affects learning or play, seek professional advice.

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Why Toddlers May Feel Scared in New Situations

Some children are cautious and fearful in new situations.

Fear and anxiety are normal when facing new experiences.

Toddlers may not have the words to express themselves and may have tantrums.

If anxiety becomes frequent, it can grow and prevent participation in activities.

Support your child by encouraging bravery and showing them how to handle new situations.

Common Triggers of Toddler Anxiety

Moving house or into a new bed
Going to preschool or daycare
Family problems like breakdowns
Visiting a doctor or dentist
Meeting new people
Separation anxiety

Signs of anxiety may include:

Trouble sleeping
Stomach aches
Changes in appetite
Headaches
Nightmares
Irritability
Less playfulness
Difficulty calming down
Excessive clinginess

Helping Your Child Adapt

Here are some ways to help your child with new situations:

Acknowledge your child's worries and avoid forcing them into scary situations. Help them label their feelings, like saying, "It seems like you're feeling

worried. My tummy feels wobbly when I'm worried."

Prepare them for new situations by telling them in advance.

Encourage bravery and trying new things.

Stay with your child as they adjust, then gently encourage them to explore and play with others.

If needed, break down the situation into manageable parts, such as watching others swim before getting in the water.

Let your child try to solve problems on their own, offering help when needed.

Teach your child calming techniques like slow breathing.

When to Seek Professional Help

If your child's fears significantly affect their ability to learn or play, seek professional advice:

From their teacher or care worker

From your doctor, who may refer you to a pediatrician or psychologist

From a community health centre

Anxiety may sometimes indicate other issues like speech problems, autism, or anxiety disorders.

Tools And Assistance

Visit parenting websites for additional help and support. You can also consult a maternal child health nurse.

Some helpful resources include:

Services for emotional regulation and support

Parenting education programs

Books and videos to help your child understand emotions