

# Recognising and supporting children's anxiety for educators



Anxiety can take different forms, and some children will show symptoms of a number of types of anxiety. All children will have times when they feel worried or fearful. However some children's anxious thoughts and feelings will stop them from participating in activities or enjoying themselves. This form can help you reflect and learn about a child's anxiety and consider ways to identify triggers and provide support.

This form is designed to help you identify when a child might be feeling anxious. Talking with families about their observations will help you develop a shared understanding about the child's worries. Involving children in this activity by asking them questions to add-on to their family's observations and your own, will increase your capacity to recognise signs they may show when starting to worry or feel anxious. Doing this activity together can also play an important role in helping them build trust and confidence to ask for help or take some steps to feel calmer.

Where possible, separate early signs of anxiety from later indicators, so that you can respond quickly to provide supports or intervention. Consider sharing this form with other educators and staff involved in the child's care and education.

Child's name is:

When

(insert child's name)

is feeling anxious, I might see:

## Body language

Tense shoulders, closed body language, lack of eye contact, tearfulness

## Physical symptoms

Feeling unwell, sweaty palms, flushed face, racing heart, trouble breathing, sweating, trembling, dizziness

## Emotions

Anger, frustration, fear, panicked, crying, teary, embarrassed/selfconscious

## Disruptions to daily life

Difficulty sleeping, fatigue, may skip meals, frequent headaches/stomachaches



## Separation

If child is roughly 3 years or older

Clingy, refuses to sleep alone, distress when separating, expresses worry about family members/safety

## Other

(describe other indicators you have noticed)

## Behaviour

Overplanning, lack of compromise, too compliant, acting out/oppositional, avoidance, little/no communication (selective mutism), irritability, restlessness, extreme shyness, meltdowns, withdrawal, regression, avoidance, lack of concentration, reassurance seeking, negative thinking, perfectionism

Highlight any early signs of anxiety observed in one colour; and later signs that anxiety is escalating in another colour.

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Think about the strengths and strategies a child already has that helps them calm down, laugh, or feel grounded and connected.

When I first notice early signs of anxiety, some strategies that may help include:

When I notice the child's anxiety escalating, some strategies that may help include:

Some situations or stimuli that may contribute to the child's anxiety are:

For more helpful resources, visit: [AllPlay Learn's Professional Learning Courses](#) and [Educators' strategy page on anxiety](#).