

# Manage your own feelings

If you naturally struggle as a parent to manage your own anxiety, the questions below may be a helpful tool for you, and they may also help you to model a healthy attitude to your child.

- 1. What can I control?** There are many things in life we have no control over, but there are some things we can influence. Focusing on things like tidying the house, eating well or taking exercise can help us feel more in control and less fearful of the things we can't control.
- 2. What is real?** Your imagination can conjure up all sorts of scenarios that may never happen. Sometimes it helps to stop and ask yourself which concerns are real and which are imagined. Use the 'blue to true' thinking technique to help with this.
- 3. What am I really worried about?** Ask yourself this question if you find yourself overreacting in some situations. For example, you may have reacted very emotionally about a minor incident, but what you're really worried about is your finances. Identifying this can help you focus on finding a solution to the main problem.

#### 4. Who can I ask for help?

If you have worries and anxieties, it's good to ask for help from someone who is a calming influence. Talking through your anxieties can help you feel calmer and stop them from escalating.



Don't try to fix everything. Give children a chance to find their own solutions to minor problems.

**Katharine Hill**



Care for the Family creates resources that help to build firm foundations for family life and support those who face family difficulties.

## Resources

**Read** *A Mind of Their Own: Building Your Child's Emotional Wellbeing in a Post-Pandemic World* by Katharine Hill [cff.org.uk/shop](https://cff.org.uk/shop)

**Run** the *A Mind of Their Own* session with a group of parents [cff.org.uk/amoto-resource](https://cff.org.uk/amoto-resource)

**Read** *Left to Their Own Devices* by Katharine Hill [cff.org.uk/shop](https://cff.org.uk/shop)

[cff.org.uk](https://cff.org.uk)  
029 2081 0800  
[mail@cff.org.uk](mailto:mail@cff.org.uk)



TLTFW04

A Christian initiative to strengthen family life, offering support to everyone.  
Care for the Family is a registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).  
A company limited by guarantee no. 3482910. Registered in England and Wales.  
Registered office: Tovey House, Cleppa Park, Newport, NP10 8BA.

# Top Tips For Parents

## Family Wellbeing



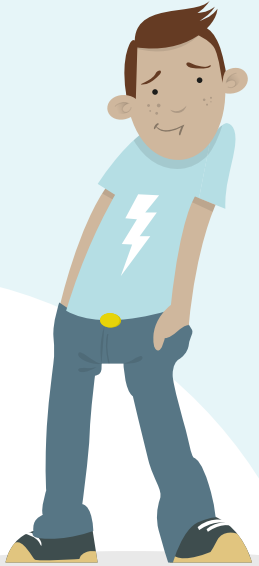
Children are growing up in a worried world. The good news is that the people best placed to help them are their parents.

Here are some helpful things you can do now, in the midst of the ups-and-downs of family life to help your children grow into emotionally healthy, strong, resilient adults.

## Give effective praise

When it feels like the world is against them, remind them they are valued, and that you see the good in them and that you have their back.

Take time to celebrate character and effort as well as achievement. When exams come along, why not celebrate after the exam, but before results day? That way you are telling them, that no matter what the results are, you recognise that they have given it their best shot.



## Look after yourself

By looking after yourself, you show your children how to look after themselves. What are the things you look forward to the most? A long walk, a candlelit bubble bath, a game of football, a special meal? Don't feel guilty about doing things for yourself.

## Help them discover a realistic view of themselves

TV talent shows and social media platforms give children the message they can all achieve extraordinary things. This belief can be a major driver of anxiety, and one of the main factors affecting children's wellbeing. It puts huge pressure on them to be 'the best.' You can help your child recognise that life is not a competition. We can encourage them to develop a realistic view of themselves by celebrating their strengths, knowing and managing their weaknesses, embracing reality, making the most of every opportunity and fulfilling their potential.

When children find something challenging, they sometimes give up and say 'I can't do it.' You can recognise their potential and encourage them not to give up, but to press through. One of the greatest ways of building emotional resilience is to add one little word: 'You can't do it ... yet.' This helps to develop a growth mindset – a belief that a person's basic abilities are not fixed, and can be developed over time. When parents use this approach, children begin to realise that with effort and determination, they *can* grow.

## Managing thinking

Research has found that our brains find it easier to focus on negative thoughts rather than on positive ones. The good news is that our brains aren't fixed; they can change. Scientists call this brain plasticity, and it's possible to train the brain to think more positively.

A simple way of doing this is to use a technique called 'blue to true thinking.' This involves helping your child to recognise any blue thoughts – for example, thinking negatively about themselves or catastrophising. Ask them to replace these thoughts with true thoughts about themselves or the situation. Encourage them to remember these true thoughts by keeping a list of them to look at when the blue thoughts return.

## Make a family worry box

Encourage your child to write or draw the things that worry them. Talk about it together and then pop it in a box – perhaps a decorated shoebox. At the end of each month open and re-read them together. It may be reassuring to know just how many of those worries took care of themselves.

## Be a role model

One way to prepare your child to cope with life's emotional challenges is to communicate to them about difficulties that might be happening in your own life. Of course, there are details that a child does not need to know, but being honest and sharing a level of detail that they can handle shows them how to respond to challenging life circumstances.

**Try this strategy called Name, Explain, Frame.**

- 1) **Name** your feelings: 'I feel sad today.'
- 2) **Explain** why you feel like that: 'Because I didn't get the job I applied for.'
- 3) **Frame** a plan of action for what you'll do: 'I'm going to chat to Uncle Richard tonight.'