

# Forms of Anxiety in Children

All children suffer from anxiety from time to time, but it can become an issue if symptoms get severe or out of control. Here are some different forms of anxiety that a child may suffer from and their effects:

## 1. Separation Anxiety

This is more common in babies and younger children and can manifest itself through being 'clingy' and getting very upset when left alone. An older child may also do this if they are feeling unsettled or insecure about something. This can sometimes happen if a child's parents are going through a divorce.

## 2. Phobias

These usually have a specific focus, for example dogs, heights, water, etc. Phobias often start off as a result of a child being frightened by something when they first encounter it, or through having a particularly bad experience. It is completely normal to have a phobia during childhood and these often extend through the child's later life. Be aware, however, of the severity of the phobia and seek professional guidance if it seems to be overwhelming your child.

## 3. Generalised Anxiety

This is when a child feels anxious all the time without specific reason. There is nothing especially that triggers this and you may find your child becomes more withdrawn than normal.

## 4. Social Anxiety

This is when a child does not want to mix with other children or attend any kind of social activity. It is more common in older children and teenagers and is generally based on an extreme feeling of shyness and a fear of saying or doing the wrong thing.

## 5. School-Based Anxiety

Lots of children become anxious about school work, friends at school, or even bullying. This can get worse if a child is moving schools or is changing classes, so it is common at the beginning of the new academic year. Younger children may complain of a physical illness to avoid attending school.

## 6. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

This is more common in adults, but it can start in childhood and is often linked with other disorders like autism.

Anxiety disorders that manifest themselves when a child is young often go on into the teenage years and beyond. It is important for teachers and parents to recognise a child's anxiety and develop support strategies that will help the child.