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Anxiety Disorders in Children and Teens

Children and teens have anxiety in their lives, and like adults, they can suffer from anxiety disorders, too. Stressful events such as starting school, moving, or the loss of a parent can trigger the onset of an anxiety disorder, but a specific stressor need not be the precursor to the development of a disorder. Research has shown that if left untreated, children with anxiety disorders are at higher risk to perform poorly in school, to have less developed social skills, and to be more vulnerable to substance abuse.

While children can develop any of the recognized anxiety disorders, some disorders are more common in childhood. Some tend to be specific to stages of development. [Separation anxiety disorder](#) and [specific phobias](#) are more common in children about 6 to 9 years old. [Generalized anxiety disorder](#) (GAD) and [social anxiety disorder](#) are more common in middle childhood and adolescence; [panic disorder](#) can occur in adolescence, too. As with adults, depression has a high rate of comorbidity in children, particularly teenagers.

Although children experience the symptoms of anxiety in much the same way as adults do, they display and react to symptoms differently. This can lead to difficulties in diagnosis, and it may be difficult to determine if a child's behavior is "just a phase" or whether it constitutes a disorder.

Read more information about anxiety disorders in children:

- [Social Anxiety Disorder](#)
- [School Refusal or Avoidance](#)

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Children and their parents share stories of hope about their experiences with an anxiety disorder.

Read [What's the Worst That Could Happen?](#), [My Silent Child](#), and [My Experience With OCD](#).

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