

# What is Anxiety in Children?

Anxiety is a common and natural human response to situations that are threatening. However, it can become problematic when it is excessive, uncontrollable, and not based upon an identifiable threat. There are a variety of diagnosable anxiety disorders including Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Phobia's, Panic Disorders, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders.

Anxiety disorders share a number of common features. Anxiety in children, can have very significant impact upon their learning and emotional growth.



## Signs of anxiety difficulties may include:

- Consistent and excessive worries
- Physiological symptoms such as fatigue, tension, headaches and stomachaches
- Difficulties with sustained attention and concentration
- Unwarranted fears and irritability
- Difficulties with falling and remaining asleep
- A sense of restlessness, or being “wound up”

## Anxiety and Alternative Learners

Many children who do not have a diagnosed anxiety disorder will still experience mild difficulties with stress, worry, irritability, concentration problems, physical tension, and avoidant behaviors. While modest difficulties may not require the same level of intervention as a child with a diagnosable anxiety disorder might, but they may be helped by many of the technologies and academic strategies presented here.

Children with anxiety are disproportionately concerned about their own skills and how others rate their performance. As a result, these children are drawn to activities and technologies that facilitate practicing academic skills on their own. This allows them to make progress at their own rate and also to not feel judged by others when they fail because only they and the computer program recognize that they made a mistake.

Children with anxiety and other psychiatric disorders tend to perform more poorly in school due in part to problems with sustaining their attention and effort. Children with severe anxiety disorders, in particular social anxiety disorder, may find the stress of simply going to school to be overwhelming and as a result become truant.