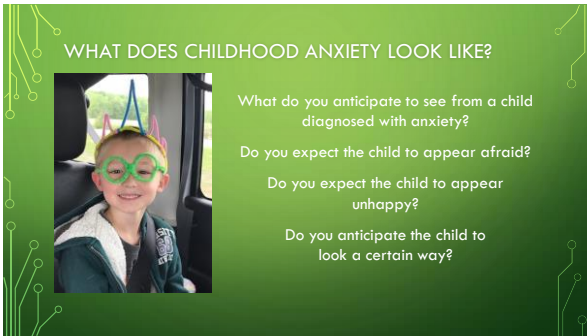



Addressing Anxiety in Young Learners: A Teacher's Guide to Recognizing Needs and Resolving Behaviors

Presented by Sarah Taylor Vanover

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WHAT DOES CHILDHOOD ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?



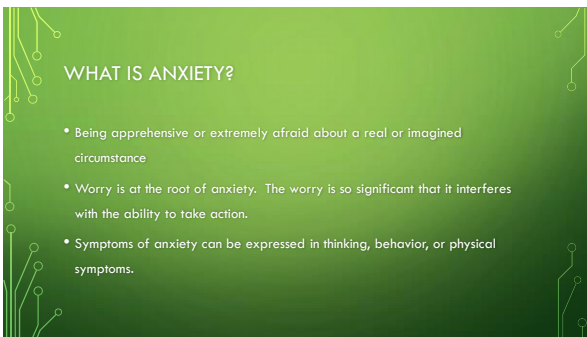
What do you anticipate to see from a child diagnosed with anxiety?

Do you expect the child to appear afraid?

Do you expect the child to appear unhappy?

Do you anticipate the child to look a certain way?

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WHAT IS ANXIETY?


- Being apprehensive or extremely afraid about a real or imagined circumstance
- Worry is at the root of anxiety. The worry is so significant that it interferes with the ability to take action.
- Symptoms of anxiety can be expressed in thinking, behavior, or physical symptoms.

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TAKE A PERSONAL LOOK

What causes you to feel anxious?

Do you think a child would have similar fears?



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TYPES OF ANXIETY

- Situational Anxiety – Temporary and a reaction to a current situation. Once the stressor is gone, then the anxiety subsides.
Ex. Separation Anxiety or Social Anxiety
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder – Chronic worrying and anxiety where there is not one specific reason. The level of worry is not proportionate to the actual circumstance and is extremely hard to control.

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WHAT DOES GENERALIZED ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

- Is Extremely Conscientious
- Worries About Making Mistakes
- Has Difficulty Performing for Assessments
- Worries About Performing Well Enough
- Worries About Health, Safety, Family or Money
- Is Afraid of New Situations
- Asks a Lot of Questions and Seeks Reassurance
- Worries a Lot After Seeing News Stories or Scary Movies

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WHAT DOES SEPARATION ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

- Worries About Getting Lost
- Worries About Someone Close to Him or Her Getting Sick or Hurt
- Gets Upset when He or She Must Be Away from Mom or Dad
- Gets Upset When Parents Go Out
- Avoids Going to School
- Refuses to Sleep at Other People's Homes Unless Parents are There
- Complains of Feeling Sick When He or She Must Separate
- Afraid of Something Terrible Happening to Mom or Dad

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WHAT DOES SOCIAL ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

- Shy
- Has Difficulty Meeting People
- Has Difficulty Joining Groups
- Has Few Friends
- Avoids Interacting with Peers
- Doesn't Like to Be the Center of Attention
- Believes Others Will Think Badly of Him or Her
- Avoids Wearing Different Clothing
- Doesn't Speak to People
- Scared of Asking or Answering Questions in Class
- Worried that Someone Will Laugh at Him or Her

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PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

- Nausea
- Trembling
- Sweating
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Increased Heart Rate
- Wobbly Knees
- Crying
- Intense Need to Go to the Toilet
- Feeling Too Hot
- Blushing
- Shakiness

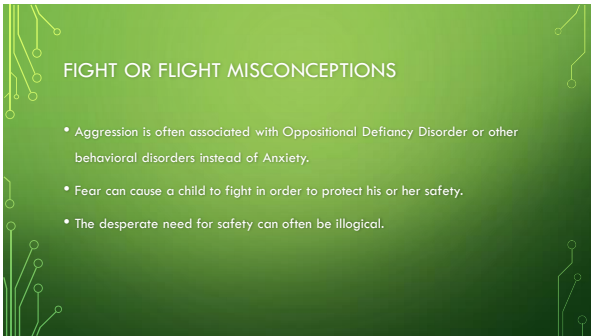
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BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

- Fight or Flight
- Aggression
- Selective Mutism
- Restlessness
- Irritability

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FIGHT OR FLIGHT MISCONCEPTIONS

- Aggression is often associated with Oppositional Defiant Disorder or other behavioral disorders instead of Anxiety.
- Fear can cause a child to fight in order to protect his or her safety.
- The desperate need for safety can often be illogical.

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COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

- Lack of Concentration
- Racing Thoughts
- Irrational Worry
- Feelings of Doom
- Disproportionate Reactions

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TRIGGERS FOR SEPARATION ANXIETY

- Illness in the Family
- Divorce
- Death in the Family
- Family Member is Deployed
- Change in Family Structure
- Parent Incarcerated
- Difficulty Transitioning from Home to School

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ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

• Physical Abuse	• Mental Illness
• Emotional Abuse	• Domestic Violence
• Sexual Abuse	• Divorce
• Physical Neglect	• Incarcerated Relative
• Emotional Neglect	• Substance Abuse

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DOES ALL ANXIETY STEM FROM ACES?

- Past or current trauma can cause anxiety, but it is not the only source.
- Inherited trait
- Anxiety may be linked to underlying medical conditions (ex. Heart disease, diabetes, thyroid disease, respiratory disorders)
- Co-morbidity to conditions like Autism or ADHD

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TREATMENT FOR CHILDHOOD ANXIETY

- Play-based therapy
- Calming Strategies
- Consistent Routines
- Medication

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ZONES OF REGULATION



The Zones of Regulation: A Curriculum Designed to Foster Self-Regulation and Emotional Control by Leah M. Kuypers
www.zonesofregulation.com

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THE RED ZONE

EXTREMELY HEIGHTENED state of alertness

- Anger
- Rage
- Devastation
- Terror

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THE YELLOW ZONE

Heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions

- Stress
- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Excitement
- Silliness & Wiggles
- Nervousness

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THE GREEN ZONE

Calm state of alertness

- Happy
- Focused
- Content
- Ready to learn
- Optimal learning conditions

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THE BLUE ZONE

Low states of alertness

- Down feelings
- Sad
- Tired
- Sick
- Bored

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SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

- Daily schedule can be slightly altered, but the order of daily events should be consistent.
- Picture schedules can be utilized to help young children identify what activities happen each day.
- If a child is overwhelmed by seeing the full-day schedule, then utilize a schedule of two to three events at a time.

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CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

- Determine what the underlying cause of the disorder is to best plan interventions (ex. Social anxiety)
- Consistent Daily Routines
- Identify a Safe Place
- Positive Reinforcement/Rewarding Positive Behavior
- Relaxation Techniques

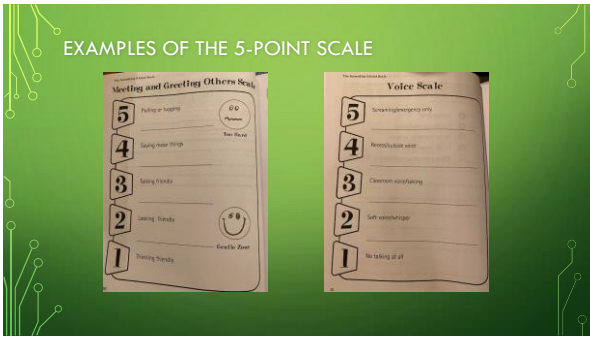
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TIME FOR SELF-EVALUATION



The Incredible 5-Point Scale
 By Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
 This is a tool that encourages self-regulation by looking at your own emotional cues.

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ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Virtual Group Meetings
- School-Wide Events and Field Trips
- Dress-Up Days

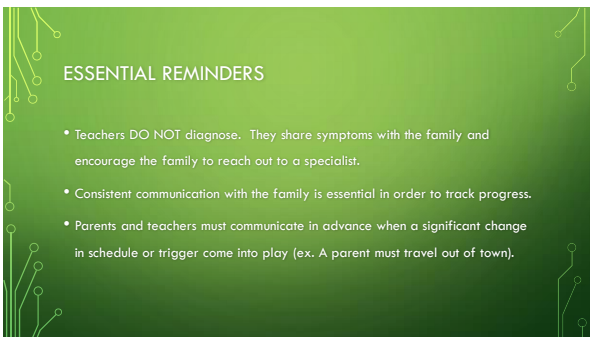
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STRATEGIES TO AVOID

- Classroom Behavior Charts
- Public Redirection
- Public Praise (potentially)
- Loss of Privileges (specifically outdoor/gross motor play)
- Regular Changes in Classroom Schedule

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ESSENTIAL REMINDERS

- Teachers DO NOT diagnose. They share symptoms with the family and encourage the family to reach out to a specialist.
- Consistent communication with the family is essential in order to track progress.
- Parents and teachers must communicate in advance when a significant change in schedule or trigger come into play (ex. A parent must travel out of town).

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