

Social Anxiety Disorder

Young children with Social Anxiety Disorder (SoAD) have a **persistent** fear of being in social situations where they are exposed to being evaluated by others.



Some of these situations include:



- They are afraid that what they say or do will be judged negatively.
- They also fear that their anxiety symptoms such as looking scared, freezing, or having a public meltdown, will cause them to offend others or be rejected.
- They have an extremely strong fear of being embarrassed or humiliated.**

For children with SoAD, **social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety.** They may cry, throw tantrums, freeze, cling, shrink, or not speak in social situations.



They try to avoid social situations altogether, or endure them with intense fear or anxiety.



Parents should consider seeking professional help if:

- the social anxiety has lasted for **at least 6 months**, and
- causes the child **significant distress** such that he or she has been unable to function in social activities that most children can take part in.

Intervention for SoAD usually involves working with the child and parents. The goal of intervention is usually to **increase coping and decrease anxiety symptoms.**



Tips to help children with Social Anxiety Disorder

1. Prepare your child

Prepare your child for social situations that may make them feel scared or anxious. **Tell your child what to expect** in these situations such as who will be there and what will happen.



2. Share your own experiences

Share your own anxious experiences with them. Let them know you had felt scared at the time, and what you had done helped you feel better.

This helps your child know that you should understand and will support them.

When mummy was your age, I was also scared of performing on stage.



I practiced performing in front of grandma first to build up my confidence!



3. Acknowledge and praise brave behaviours

Praise your child when they do something that usually makes them feel anxious. Praise them when they are alone with you so that you do not draw attention to them.

In front of others, you can show your pride by giving them a small or a tap on the back.



It was brave of you to say hello to the boy at the playground earlier.

4. Avoid criticisms

Avoid criticising your child or being negative about their difficulty in social situations and comparing them with others.



5. Stand up for your child

If other people comment about your child's behaviour in social situations, **stand up for them**.

Tell them about the things your child can do around family members or people your child is comfortable with.



To learn more about **Anxiety**, scan this QR code or visit <https://tinyurl.com/KKHDCD-understandinganxiety>



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Disclaimer: The content is for informational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please seek help from a qualified healthcare provider if you have any concerns regarding your child's behaviour.

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