



# YMCA WA EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

Nurturing children in body, mind and spirit



## ANXIETY IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Anxiety and fear in children is a normal part of development and in fact they are essential for our survival. It is only when these fears and worries start to interfere with your child's daily life that you might need to consider professional help.

Different fears and anxieties develop at different stages, for example:

- Babies and toddlers often fear loud noises, separation and strangers
- Young children might start to show fear of the dark or staying on their own

Anxiety, worry or fear?

Worry and fear are different forms of anxiety. Worry usually happens when a child thinks about past or future situations. Fear usually happens in the present.

Tips to help your child if he/she shows signs of normal childhood anxiety:

1. Acknowledge your child's fears or worries – do not dismiss them or ignore them
2. Help your child through their fears/worries, gently encourage them to do things they might feel anxious about, but do not force them.
3. Wait until your child is actually anxious before you step in to help.

4. Praise your child for facing a fear/worry and do not criticise them for being afraid
5. Try not to label your child as 'shy' or 'anxious' and do not anticipate his or her fears

When should you be concerned of your child's anxiety?

- Ask yourself if whether your child's anxiety is interfering with his /her daily life, for example it is stopping him/her from making friends, socialising or leaving the house?
- Look at the severity of your child's reaction to a situation that might cause them anxiety.

You know your child best, but it is important to seek professional help if their anxiety is impacting their health and happiness.

References

[www.maggiedent.com/common-concerns/anxiety-fear-calming-children/](http://www.maggiedent.com/common-concerns/anxiety-fear-calming-children/)

[www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/anxiety\\_and\\_fears.html](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/anxiety_and_fears.html)