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Our Kids
Magazine



Dealing With Teen Anxiety

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12

Most Common Types of Schools

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Education Listings



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A note from the Editor

Hi, everyone! My name is Andres. This is my second issue as editor of OurKids Magazine. There's so much going on in the world and in our kid's schools, it's no wonder many are dealing with high levels of stress and anxiety. I wanted to include an article to help you navigate that anxiety with your children; see page 14 for that. I wanted to let you know that we're also moving back to a month to month publication schedule, which is super exciting! keep an eye out for more!



Andres Flores
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Kids are dealing with anxiety at an all time high. Author Christina Katz writes about things you can do to help them cope with it.

Find on page 14



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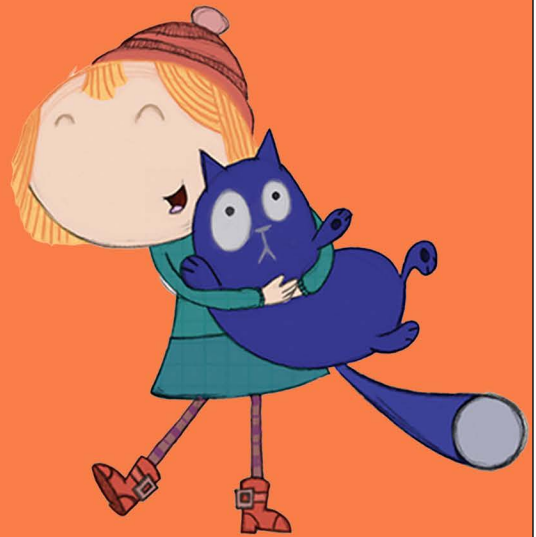
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Picking The Right Kind of School For Your Kids

Story by
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.

Tanni Haas, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Sciences, and Disorders at The City University of New York – Brooklyn College.

Parents who're looking for a school for their kids for the first time can be forgiven if they're confused. There are many different kinds of schools, and it can be difficult to tell the difference between them. Here, I provide an overview of the dozen most common school choices, so that parents can make informed decisions that best serve their particular needs.

Boarding Schools

Boarding schools are private schools where students live and learn together on a campus. You can send your kids to a boarding school from kindergarten right up through high school, or for a single school year. They attract kids from across the globe, have high academic standards, offer lots of extra-curricular activities, foster close relationships between teachers and students, and are great if you want your kid to develop their independence and become more mature.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are a specific kind of public schools. Like regular public schools, they receive public funding. However, they're independently operated and have more autonomy than most public schools when it comes to curriculum and instruction. They tend to have a specific educational focus like performing arts or math and science. Students are often selected through a lottery rather than on their academic merit or other factors like demographics.

Distance-Learning Schools

Distance-learning schools, also known as online or virtual schools, are schools where students receive instruction from home, similar to what's happening during the pandemic but on a permanent basis. They can be public or private, and they often abide by the same educational regulations and standards as brick-and-mortar schools. Parents often choose distance-learning schools because they like their convenience and flexibility.

District-Zoned Schools

District-zoned schools, or neighborhood schools as they're also known, are the formal name of the regular public schools in your area. These are publicly funded, follow state guidelines for curriculum and instruction, and are open to all kids living within their catchment area (or zone). Most parents send their kids to district-zoned schools because they're conveniently located and their kids are virtually guaranteed to have their neighborhood friends as classmates.

International Baccalaureate Schools

International baccalaureate

schools are schools that are members of the International Baccalaureate Association, an international educational foundation founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968. They include both private and public elementary, middle, and high schools. Students who graduate from these academically-rigorous high school programs are highly competitive when they apply for admission to colleges and universities around the world.

Language Immersion Schools

Language immersion schools are private and public schools in which all or most of the instruction is delivered in a language other than English.

The teachers are often fluent in two or more languages. The educational programs are typically designed for students whose native language is English, and they're great if you want your kids to become fluent in another language. Common languages of instruction include Chinese, French, Japanese, and Spanish.

Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are public schools that are open to kids from multiple districts. Like charter schools, they operate alongside regular public schools, have a particular educational focus, and their instruction often emphasizes hands-on learning. Unlike charter schools, however,

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magnet schools don't admit students via a lottery but instead try to promote a diverse student body in terms of demographics, while at the same time factoring in the academic merit of students.

Montessori Schools

Montessori schools are private schools that follow the educational philosophy of the Italian physician Maria Montessori who promoted a child-centered approach that includes lots of hands-on exploration. Instead of a one-size-fits-all curriculum, Montessori schools appeal to each individual student's interests and abilities. Another feature that distinguishes Montessori schools from traditional schools is that teachers stay with the same group of students for several years.

Parochial Schools

Parochial schools are private Christian schools that operate under the auspices of local parish churches (hence the name). Parochial schools teach regular academic subjects like language arts, math, science, and social studies in addition to offering religious instruction and prayer services. Parents often choose a parochial school because they want their kids' education to be grounded in particular religious values.

Reggio Emilia Schools

Reggio Emilia schools are private schools that follow a specific educational philosophy that was developed by parents living in the Italian city of Reggio Emilia in the 1940s. These schools assume that kids form their own personality and therefore have a student-centered curriculum that includes experiential learning, play, and self-expression. Teachers focus on the interests of individual students, ask lots of questions, and engage in activities alongside their students.


Special Education Schools

Special education schools are private and public schools that serve students with special needs. Some focus on multiple needs, others on specific learning differences. These can include communicative, physical, and social learning differences like ADHD, autism, and hearing impairment. Teachers are educated to

meet the specialized learning needs of students. They often have an extensive support staff of guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Waldorf Schools

Waldorf schools, also known as Steiner schools, are private schools that follow the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher and social reformer who promoted a specific kind of holistic learning that emphasizes practical skills, imagination, and intellectual development. Like Montessori schools, teachers stay with the same group of students for several years to foster a close and intimate mentor - mentee relationship.



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Learning Disabilities and ADHD: What Parents Need to Know

Approximately 10% of American school-age children suffer from a learning disability (LD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control. About 4% of children have both. But for many kids, these disorders go undetected despite their ongoing struggles with school work and behavior issues that often accompany the conditions.

Often, parents don't suspect learning disabilities because many people associate it with low IQ. But LDs affect children of all intelligence levels and has nothing to do with IQ. In fact, it isn't uncommon for a child with a learning disability to excel in one or multiple subjects, while struggling in another. Also, kids with LDs or ADHD may do well under certain conditions. Yet, in other situations, they have great difficulty. Depending on the LD and severity of it, a child might struggle in all areas.

Forms of learning disabilities

There are multiple forms of LDs. Some pose input problems, which means a child struggles with either sound or visual input. What happens is the information isn't processed correctly or gets stored incorrectly in the brain. This can pose problems with the retrieval of information as well

as short or long-term memory.

An LD can also cause output problems. This can sometimes be seen in motor skills such as handwriting difficulties. Another common problem is verbal output. This is usually evident in kids that have trouble organizing their thoughts either in writing or orally. Punctuation, grammar, and spelling may also suffer as a result.

Dyscalculia is a math learning disability. Kids with dyscalculia may have difficulty learning to tell time, counting money or counting in general, learning math facts, calculating, understanding measurement, or performing mental math.

Dyslexia is a reading disability, although the symptoms are not exclusive to reading. Children with this disorder may have difficulty with spelling, vocabulary, or comprehension. They may read slow, have trouble learning left from right, or have organizational problems with both written and spoken language.

Dysgraphia is a writing disability. Poor handwriting and often, an awkward style of holding a pencil or even contorting the body while writing are hallmarks. A child may also have trouble drawing lines.

With dysgraphia, kids can often better express their understanding of the material through speech than in writing.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is a problem with input. It isn't a hearing problem. Instead, the brain has difficulty processing sounds. As a result, kids with APD can be distracted by loud noise or struggle to follow conversations. This can be especially problematic when there's a lot of background noise, which makes it difficult to distinguish sounds.

Visual Processing Disorders (VPD) are also a problem with input. But VPD isn't a vision problem. It's actually a problem with the brain processing what the eyes see. It can result in a child bumping into things or being unable to distinguish the shapes they see. It can also pose difficulty in identifying letters or numbers or result in problems with visual sequencing, among other symptoms.

Nonverbal Learning Disorder (NLD) is similar to Asperger Syndrome and shows up as difficulties with social skills. Academic problems are sometimes present as well. But often, these don't show up until kids reach higher grade levels. Those with NLD may be afraid of new situations, struggle to make friends, lack common sense, and experience social withdrawal. Academic problems can include reading comprehension and working out math story problems.

ADHD is marked by attention problems and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity. Girls often have only attention issues, while boys are more commonly impulsive or hyperactive. Symptoms can include difficulty staying on task or paying attention. Yet, they often hyperfocus on stimulating activity. Children with ADHD may fidget or have trouble staying seated, interrupt, and act without thinking.

What to do if you suspect your child has an LD or ADHD

The first step is to talk with your child's teacher and find out what the teacher has observed. Then speak to the school principal. Public schools are required by law to provide an assessment. This should include an IQ test, assessments of math, reading, and writing, and testing of processing skills. If your child is in a private school and it doesn't offer this service, you can request it through your public school district. Once your child has received a diagnosis, your school psychologist should be able to recommend and help you set up services or accommodations for your kid. Depending on the specific learning disability, your child may qualify for special education services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Keep in mind, you are your child's best advocate. So read books and articles on your child's LD and learn how you and your school can help. Talk to your child's teacher about additional ways the teacher can assist your child. Most teachers are eager to help. Although, depending on the student-teacher ratio and the school's resources, it's sometimes challenging for teachers to do as much as

“The first step is to talk with your child's teacher and find out what the teacher has observed.”

they'd like. There are likely other kids in their classrooms with special needs as well. If you feel your child isn't getting the help needed, talk to the school administrator.

Story by
Kimberly Blaker

You can learn more about symptoms by visiting the website of the Learning Disabilities Association of America, just scan this link:



2022 Education Guide

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Don't Panic About Anxiety:

Teach Teens To Navigate Nerves When Anxiousness Strikes

With so many kids afflicted with anxiety these days, parents are wise to discuss how to manage nerves with teens before anxiousness becomes a problem. This means starting conversations in late elementary school and throughout middle school, rather than waiting for high school.

Can you anxiety-proof your kids? Probably not completely, but you can teach your child the necessary and important

life skills for navigating anxious feelings that are bound to crop up.

If your child begins to show signs of persistent anxiousness, don't panic. This is your opportunity to spark an ongoing discussion about mood management. Have a talk while you take a walk outdoors or go for a drive. Without making a huge, dramatic deal about it, revisit the topic of managing emotional ups and downs frequently, so

your child understands that he can and will learn to navigate challenging emotions (see sidebar for when to seek help).

As much as you may wish for a magic wand, you don't have one you can wave that makes your child's worries disappear. And even if you did, you don't want to dismiss or minimize your children's anxiety when it crops up. You want to help your children manage the spectrum of emotions that emerge in

Story by
Christina Katz

*Author, writing coach and journalist
Christina Katz is always striving to find
the middle ground in parenting advice.
She knows clear lines of communication
between parents and teens are always
so important, especially with a mental
health topic.*



everyday life. Try these anti-anxiety tips. They can help everyone in the family feel calmer and more centered.

Affirm nerves are normal. Wouldn't life be dull if there was never anything to get anxious about? Of course it would. Talk to your child about facing, showing up for, and walking through life's challenges and how all of this makes us stronger and more confident. You might be tempted to minimize challenges for an emotionally sensitive child, but confronting a steady, manageable flow of age-appropriate challenges is not only educational in the short run, it's also healthy in the long run.

Teach self-soothing. Multi-sensory experiences can immediately shift a child out of a nervous mood: taking a bath, singing songs out loud, or exercising vigorously outdoors. Experiment with your child in low-pressure situations to discover tension-relieving activities to use later as needed. Get in the life-long habit of consciously lowering anxiousness and then redirecting attention in a more productive manner.

Let excitement feel scary. Is your child excited? Even healthy excitement can feel a little scary sometimes. Not knowing how things will turn out usually makes the heart rate go up and is part of the joy of living. We don't get to control every outcome, which leads to

suspense. So our job is to feel the excitement, show up, and put one foot in front of the other, whether things always go our way or not.

Pack three meals plus two protein snacks. Make sure your child is not suffering from low blood sugar, which can increase anxiety, by planning on three balanced meals daily plus two high-protein snacks like a granola bar or yogurt between meals. If your child shows signs of sugar lows, like shaky hands or emotional outbursts between meals, blood sugar might be an issue. Make a habit of grabbing a sandwich or a protein pack before a stressful event, no matter what the time of day.

Avoid sugar and caffeine. Avoid sodas and candy. Consider eliminating all foods with high fructose corn syrup from your

family's diet. If your child has food sensitivities or allergies, take steps to address them so foods don't become an anxiety trigger. If sugar and caffeine are often consumed, let them follow meals so they don't trigger a blood sugar roller coaster.

Accept personality quirks. Never

“We don't get to control every outcome, which leads to suspense”

assume your child can handle something simply because you would have been able to handle it or because your child's siblings or friends can. After a challenging experience, ask her how she feels, rather than assuming how she should feel. Be interested in the ways your child experiences life differently from you and from others and support her individuality by validating the positivity in being unique.

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Cheer them on. We have so many jobs as parents, but one of the most important jobs is the cheerleader role. Don't take yourself so seriously as a grown-up that you can't come down to your child's level and say, "You can do it!" Your child needs you next to her, encouraging her, not scowling down from on high, fretting about outcomes. If you want your kids to be brave, don't pressure them - cheer them on instead.

Weather disappointments. As a parent, you must be able to see your child cry without over-reacting. Teaching a child to avoid crying at all costs is like saying that experiencing disappointment or sadness makes them weak. When we teach kids to embrace challenging emotions, to dig deep and be honest so they can express feelings no matter how challenging in the moment, they become more resilient, empathetic citizens in the long run.

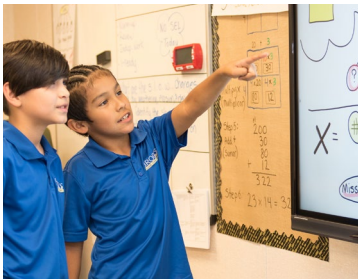
Reward bravery. We live in a fairly unpredictable world, so it's a great idea to teach kids how to take healthy risks. Kids who learn to push themselves to achieve goals, like taking a more challenging class or trying out for a competitive sport, will have less energy to channel into risky or adrenaline-fueled behavior. A great end-of-the-week dinner topic for families is: who gets to wear an invisible crown of bravery? Reward the daring, rather than the results, and then kids will learn that courage is its own reward.

When To Seek Professional Help

No doubt you have gleaned from recent media reports that anxiety is on the rise among teens in our society. Some data suggests that ten percent of teens suffer from an anxiety disorder. Other data suggests the number is higher. Kids can experience anxiety for so many reasons. Most of us have experienced some degree of anxiousness in our lives, but for many parents, the crippling sense of distress and unease some teens feel is unfamiliar. Anxiety manifests at a range of intensity levels depending on the child and the circumstances, and just because a child experiences some anxiousness does not mean

he has a disorder. However, stay on the safe side. If your child consistently displays the following symptoms, please consult a mental health professional.

1. Anxiousness to the point of headaches, stomachaches and tiredness with no other known physical cause.
2. Chronic sleeping problems including going to sleep, waking up or staying asleep.
3. Low self-esteem characterized by being excessively hard on the self for no logical reason.
4. Consistent excessive worry about everyday things like school, friends, grades, teachers, etc.
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5 Ways To Save Money on Air Travel

Story by
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.

If your vacation plans involve traveling by air, it can easily end up being very expensive. Besides comparing prices on sites like Expedia, Priceline, and Travelocity, there are things you can do to save money on air fare. Based on my own experiences as well as conversations with other parents, I've pulled together a list of some favorite money-saving tips.

Be Flexible

If you're flexible about your departure and return dates, you can save a lot of money. Flights are generally less expensive during the week than

on weekends. Consider taking the kids out of school a day or two before the school vacation starts, if that helps you find a lower air fare, since not much happens on the last days before the break.

Book Early, Last Minute, And Sign Up For Deals

You can also save money by reserving your tickets months in advance; the ideal is 2-3 months before your departure date. Grab last-minute bargains, or sign up for deals that include air fare, hotel and/or car rental.

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fee for each extra suitcase you bring on board (typically \$50-75), and they generally only allow one suitcase per passenger. To avoid those extra fees, have each family member over the age of 8 bring a carry-on bag (bags are too difficult to maneuver for younger kids). That'll also make the kids think carefully about what to carry on the trip.

Pack Your Favorite Movies and Snacks

International flights usually offer complimentary entertainment like movies and games. But that's not always the case on domestic flights. To avoid spending money

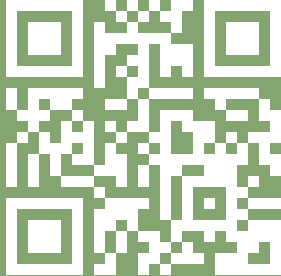
on entertainment, have the kids load their favorite movies and games on cell phones and/or tablets. The same goes for snacks; kids get hungry and on-board snacks can be very expensive, so bring their favorites with you.

Use Credit Card With Air Miles

If you have credit cards, sign up for rewards programs that let you collect points every time you pay for air fare or shop online. Many rewards programs don't require you to use a credit card – you just need to use their card when you shop.

One more thing from the editor!

If you're looking for a cheap hotel last minute, try out hoteltonight.com. It's a good way to save some money on a last minute booking. Try it out with the link below!



Two young girls are jumping joyfully against a solid green background. The girl on the left is wearing a pink t-shirt, light blue jeans, and bright pink sneakers. She has her arms raised and a wide smile. The girl on the right is wearing a white t-shirt, blue denim overalls, and white sneakers. She also has her arms raised and a joyful expression. The overall mood is happy and energetic.

Story by
Sarah Lyons

Helping Kids Make Friends at Any Age

From the time we enter the world, we search out other people to connect with. We are social beings and making and maintaining friendships are a big part of our lives from childhood on. While making friends is of great importance, it doesn't always come naturally to us. It can be difficult to find friends that are loyal and that you can build a connection with. Parents can help their kids build social skills that help them make friends at any age.

Role play

One of the easiest ways to teach kids is through play. As

you are playing and interacting with your children, role play scenarios that they may encounter when meeting new people. You can use puppets, dolls, or even stuffed animals to practice social situations they may encounter. Through play, you can teach your child how to ask someone to play or how to join in on a game that is already started. Work out possible conflicts that may arise as they play with friends. After roleplaying, kids will be more comfortable when they face similar situations on the playground.

Set an example

It is just as important for parents to build strong friendships as it is for kids. We have the opportunity to teach our kids through our example. "We move a lot so explaining how I have to make new friends and step out of my comfort zone just like they do helps a lot." says Stephanie Loux, mom of three. Do you make time for friends in your life? Do you invite friends over or meet for coffee? How often do you step outside your comfort zone to meet new people? Our kids see how we interact with others. If the parent is involved with

friends, shows empathy towards others, and helps friends in need, kids will learn that friendships are a priority and understand the natural give and take of a relationship. They will also watch how parents handle conflict and the normal highs and lows that friends experience.

The art of conversation

For kids with the gift of gab, conversation may come naturally but for others a little practice and a few tips can go a long way. Part of making and maintaining friendships is being able to take turns speaking, listening, and responding with empathy when appropriate. Parents can teach kids how to have conversations during daily life by simply modeling this skill. It can also be taught during roleplaying or simply giving them some tools to start a conversation. For example, kids should be reminded to look at the person in the eye, greet a friend as they arrive, respond when asked a question, and ask follow up questions so their friend knows they are listening. It takes some practice but it will be worth it.

Teach proper etiquette

Being polite can go a long way in building friendships. Kids who are polite, say please and thank you, pick up after themselves, and treat others respectfully are more likely to be invited to their friend's homes. Kids who take turns, share,

“Being polite can go a long way in building friendships.”

and let guests go first are also easier to be around. You can model good etiquette for your child and give them gentle reminders during playdates and social interactions.

Encourage healthy conflict resolution

All friends experience conflict. What is important is how you handle it. Door slamming, stomping feet, the silent treatment, yelling, and hitting may release anger at the moment but can be damaging to a friendship. As kids mature, it is



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important to encourage them to talk about their feelings, come up with a solution, or ask an adult to help. As much as possible, have the kids work out their conflict. However, being available to help them come to a resolution both friends can live with is important.

Be social

One easy way to encourage your kids to make friends is to provide them the opportunities to socialize. Allow your kids to invite friends over to play or to meet at a park. Hosting a playdate that encourages mutual interests helps build friendships as well. Sports and extracurricular activities are

another great place to find friends with mutual interests. "Helping them say hello to other kids at parks and school events helps," says Loux. "I also make an effort to go to all class birthday parties so they have more time with friends." Simply being around other people helps your child build social skills and make friends.

It is important to remember that everyone has a different personality which will affect how they react in social situations. Some children love to be the center of attention and thrive off of being around

others. Other children may be more reserved and shy. They may enjoy being around other people but prefer to sit back and

"Sports and extracurricular activities are another great place to find friends with mutual interests."

observe the situation. Remember that it's important to cultivate your child's social skills based on what they feel the most comfortable with, even if that is different from your own. It is also important to remember that your child does not need to be the most popular person in the class, they really only need one or two close friends to feel accepted and connected to their peers.

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Books About Friendships for Kids

Parents can teach their kids about healthy friendships by reading books. Here are some suggestions you can read aloud with your kids and build social skills at the same time.

Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller and Jen Hill

The Big Umbrella by Amy June Bates and Juniper Bates

I Am Enough by Grace Byers and Katurah A. Bobo

Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev and Taeun Yoo

Peanut Butter and Cupcake by Terry Border

Tilly and Tank by Jay Fleck

Louise and Andie: The Art of Friendship by Kelly Light

Boy + Bot by Amy Dyckman

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend by Dan Stantat

We Don't Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins



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