

Anxiety

What anxiety can look like:

- Inattention and restlessness
- Attendance problems or clinginess
- Disruptive or aggressive behavior
- Asking lots of questions
- Avoiding tasks or answering questions
- Avoiding social groups
- Perfectionism
- Acting 'too cool for school'
- Frequent stomach upsets, headaches

Strategies to support anxious children:

- The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.
- Express positive and realistic expectations:
"Joining a new club might be a bit scary, but as you settle in you will likely make friends and grow to love it."
- The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."
- Avoid asking leading questions or reinforcing the child's fears
- Try to keep the anticipatory period (before starting an anxiety-provoking activity) short

- (thinking about the above) think things through with the child
- break down the task into simpler steps – get them to focus on one step at a time
- if a child is worried about the outcome of something, get them to talk through the WORST outcome, the BEST outcome and the MOST REALISTIC outcome
- Discourage avoidance, though a task might be broken down to something more simple
- Encourage – and praise – 'having a go'
- Aim to have the child develop independence

Destructiveness

"If a student has destroyed some of their work, save what you can – calmly, take the paper from the corner of the room, unfold it, sit next to the young person and say what was good about the work, explaining that it was a good start, and that you were really pleased with it, that the student would probably benefit from transcribing it on a fresh page in the book, and, from then, extending on the great start that has been made."

Sources: <http://childmind.org/article/classroom-anxiety-in-children/www.psychologytoday.com/>
https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/sites/default/files/public/KMP_C4_CAD_AnxietySuggestions_ForSchoolStaff.pdf Phil Beadle & John Murphy: 'Why Are You Shouting at Us?'