

Avoidance



What Parents might do

If a child is anxious about going to school, it may be expressed by not wanting to take the bus, or walking themselves in to the classroom. Parents may feel they are helping by continually driving them instead of having them ride the bus, or walking them into class instead of having them walk in with other students. For a parent, this is done with the intention of reassuring and supporting their child.

What the Child might feel



In this situation the child may be getting a message that he should be anxious about the bus, or about walking in alone. Avoiding the task that makes them anxious gives the situation power, which increases the child's anxiety.



What might help

Finding the main source of anxiety will help. Sometimes children will displace their feelings and be nervous about things leading up to the problem. Once you know the issue, preparing them with a plan of what to say and how to handle situations that may come up will help them build confidence and trust themselves.

Chronic Criticism



What parents might do

Parents have the ability to see their children's potential in everything that they do. Parents want their children to experience winning the race, getting the 100%, and feeling loved and accepted by everyone. Often, parents may feel that by giving criticism during imperfect times, their child will learn to reach that higher potential, avoid failure and be happy and successful.

What the child might feel



The child that hears chronic criticism is likely to develop anxiety or a lack of self-confidence. Despite the good intentions of the parent, the message that the child is receiving is that they are not good enough, they do not make good choices, and they are not capable of doing well.



What might help

Choose positive comments over negative comments. Try using "I" statements and avoiding absolute adverbs like 'always', 'never', and 'constantly'. Offering help is a good step toward less critical parenting. Statements such as, "You always do that!" or "You never call me!" can be changed to:

"I notice sometimes you_____. Would you like help with that?" and
"I love it when you call me! Please call whenever you want to talk."

Overprotection



What parents might do

All parents want their child safe from both physical and emotional harm. Their natural instinct is to protect. If a child wants to climb a tree, the parent may think it is too dangerous. They could fall and hurt themselves. The parent may choose to protect the child from getting hurt by not allowing them to climb the tree.

What children might do



The child may get the message that their parent doesn't feel they have the strength or ability to succeed. They may internalize this feeling, especially if they experience it over and over again. This feeling of insecurity begins to present as anxiety or nervous behavior, as well as low self-confidence and self-reliance.



What might help

Allowing children to experience safe and manageable failure or disappointment and then helping them cope with it will increase their abilities in regards to decision making and will provide them with coping skills as they mature.