

# Anxiety Tools for Kids: Scripts for Moments of Worry

Gentle language for parents, caregivers & educators

You don't need to have the perfect words — but having a few phrases ready can help you stay grounded when your child is struggling. These scripts are starting points, not lines to memorise. Adapt them to your voice and your child.

## When Worry First Appears

*Lead with acknowledgment before anything else. A child who feels heard is a child who can receive support.*

### SAY

*"I can see something feels really hard right now. I'm right here with you."*

### SAY

*"That feeling makes sense. Your body is trying to protect you — and you're safe."*

### SAY

*"We don't have to fix it right now. Let's just breathe together for a second."*

### AVOID

*"There's nothing to worry about" or "You're fine" — these can feel dismissive even when well-meant.*

## When a Child Won't or Can't Talk

*Sometimes anxiety makes words impossible. Presence and co-regulation matter more than conversation.*

### SAY

*"You don't have to talk. I'm just going to sit here with you."*

### SAY

*"Can I put my hand on your back? You can say no."*

### SAY

*"Let's try breathing together. Watch me first — in through the nose... and out slowly."*

### TRY

*Sit beside them (not in front), match their energy level, then slowly calm yours down.*

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## When a Child Says "I Can't Do It"

*Anxiety narrows a child's sense of what's possible. Gently widen it without dismissing the fear.*

### SAY

*"That feeling in your body is really loud right now. That makes sense."*

### SAY

*"You've felt this way before and got through it. I remember when you..."*

### SAY

*"What's the tiniest step that feels okay right now? We can start there."*

### SAY

*"I'm not going to make you, but I'll stay close while you try."*

## After the Wave Passes

*The moments after anxiety eases are a powerful opportunity for connection and gentle learning.*

### SAY

*"That was really hard and you got through it. I'm proud of you."*

### SAY

*"What helped, even a little? I want to remember that for next time."*

### SAY

*"Your worry was trying to keep you safe. We can thank it — and also let it know you're okay."*

### AVOID

*"See? It wasn't so bad!" — this can feel invalidating even when meant kindly.*

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## Separation Anxiety (Drop-offs & Goodbyes)

*Confident, warm, and brief goodbyes help more than long reassurance. Hesitation can amplify anxiety.*

### SAY

*"I love you. I'll be back at [specific time]. Have a good morning."*

### SAY

*"Your feelings make sense. And I know you can do this."*

### TRY

*A short goodbye ritual — a special handshake, three squeezes, a wave — then go.*

### AVOID

*Going back in for "one more hug" repeatedly — it signals to your child that the situation is uncertain.*

## Bedtime & Nighttime Worry

*Nights amplify worry because there are fewer distractions. Routine, calm, and brevity are your best tools.*

### SAY

*"Your brain is quiet now so worries feel louder. That's normal — it doesn't mean they're true."*

### SAY

*"Let's put that worry in an imaginary box on the shelf. We can look at it tomorrow if we need to."*

### SAY

*"Tell me three good things from today, even tiny ones."*

### TRY

*A consistent, predictable wind-down routine — the rhythm itself signals safety to a child's nervous system.*

**SAY** helpful phrases to try

**AVOID** common phrases that can  
backfire

**TRY** an action or approach