

5...4...3...2...1...

Calm Down

5 Top Tips to Support Anxious Children

Here are some great ideas to support an anxious child when they are returning to school.

If a child is feeling panicky when coming into school or the classroom, ask them to:

See

Name **5** things they can see.

Touch

Name **4** things they can touch.

Hear

Name **3** things they can hear.

Smell

Name **2** things they can smell.

Breath

Take **1** deep breath.

Breathing Buddy

Have a breathing buddy for the child. This is a small soft toy that they can hold as they come into the classroom. Teach them to use the toy to focus on their breathing by asking them to breath slowly together or get the child to lie down with the cuddly toy on their tummy and focus on slowly breathing in and out - the toy will go up and down on their tummy!

Describe

As the child walks into the classroom, get them to notice all the things that they can see and describe them to you - 'I can see a green book with a picture of a teddy bear on it'. It's worth strategically placing the things a child is interested in around the door so that they see them as soon as they enter.

Mindful Jar

Make a Mindful Jar. Fill a jar with water and put some glitter glue or glitter into it. Tip it upside down and you have a great distracting activity! Ask the child to shake it and then to keep watching as it settles. Explain that it's like feelings when you are upset or anxious and that they settle down just like the glitter - this will teach the child about mindfulness through focusing on something calming.

Texture

Have some props ready for when the child enters the classroom and encourage them to play with them. You could have some bubbles and get the child to focus on blowing them slowly. Get them to watch the bubbles as they float away or pop. You could have some beanbags with different textures ready for the child to feel or place a balloon or a rubber ball for the child to hold and play with as they come in.