

Supporting your child with anxiety during: exam season

Exams can bring pressure, worry, and big emotions. A small amount of stress is normal, but when anxiety feels overwhelming, your support can make a real difference.

How anxiety might show up



Worry excessively about results or “getting it wrong.”

Avoid revision or become very perfectionistic.

Struggle with sleep, concentration, or mood.

Experience headaches, stomach aches, nausea, or tiredness.

What works best at home



Reassure without dismissing

“I can see this feels really hard.”
avoid “Don’t worry” or “It’s not a big deal.”

Focus on effort, not grades

Praise preparation, persistence, and small steps.
Remind them exams don’t define who they are.

Keep routines steady

Regular sleep, meals, breaks, and movement.
Calm evenings where possible.

Break revision into chunks

Short sessions feel more manageable
and build confidence.

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Simple techniques to try together



Box breathing

Helps slow the nervous system

- Breathe in for 4
- Hold for 4
- Breathe out for 4
- Hold for 4
- Repeat for 1–3 minutes



Body scan

Good before bed or after revision

- Close eyes if comfortable
- Notice each body part from feet to head
- Gently tense for 2–3 seconds, then relax



Movement

Helps burn off energy and adrenaline

- A quick walk or run
- Star jumps or stretching
- Dancing to music



Worry time

Stops worries taking over the day

- Set aside 10–15 minutes daily
- Write or talk through worries only then
- When worries pop up later, say: "We'll save that for worry time"

Parent resources:

[Parent Toolkit](#) on Mental Health in Children & Young People from Place2Be, Young Minds, Kings Maudsley Trust

[Parenting Smart](#) from Place2be

[Anna Freud family wellbeing resources](#)

Remember

Your calm presence matters more than perfect advice. Let your child know, often, that they are loved, supported, and valued, whatever the results.

