

EASE at Home (Grades 4-7)

Strategies to help children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

Relaxation Skills: Tense & Relax

What is it?

When kids and adults feel worried, they tense up physically. This muscle tension can feel uncomfortable and contribute to general feelings of unease. *Tense and Relax* involves children learning to tense up, hold, and completely relax each muscle group, one at a time. The longer and more fully a child can work through the whole body, the more powerful the relaxing effect will be.

How?

Help your child understand the difference between feeling tense and feeling relaxed by asking them to imagine themselves as:



A body builder flexing their muscles one by one

A runner shaking to loosen up all their muscles before a race



Stiff, uncooked spaghetti, then soft, cooked spaghetti

Read a tense and relax [script](#) out loud - use a calming tone and pick a quiet time like after lunch or before bed when you won't feel rushed

Follow along with a guided [tense and relax exercise](#)

Hint: Just like Calm Breathing, Tense and Relax is best practiced regularly so it will be more effective when needed for calming the body down.



Everyday
Anxiety
Strategies for
Educators

EASE (Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators) is a collection of classroom resources that have been adapted for parents and caregivers to help children manage anxiety and worries at home.

