

So, what does my child need to learn?

In essence, your child will need to learn that their anxious expectations are unlikely to happen and/or that if they do, there is something they can do, or they may cope better than they think/expect. Your main role is to support your child in developing a different perspective or point of view so that they no longer **expect** something bad to happen or expect that they will not be able to cope. This will help your child to be open to new ideas about what might happen.

It is important to keep in mind that sometimes children's anxious expectations are based on reality and you may discover, through putting them to the test, that the bad thing your child anticipated has actually happened and may happen again. For example, they might have given an incorrect answer in class, and everyone laughed, which made them feel understandably upset. In this case, the focus will be on what your child needs to learn (or do) to cope with and solve this problem situation if it happens again (see Chapter 11).

In order to find out what your child needs to learn about their anxious expectations, first of all write down the goal you are focusing on in the table opposite. In the second column, note down what your child expects to happen in challenging situations that relate to this goal. We have included some examples to help you.

You are now ready to decide what your child needs to learn in order to overcome their anxiety problems. This will be

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different for each situation you have identified. Have a go at filling in the third column, 'What does my child need to learn?' There is nothing magical or mystical about this – your child simply needs to learn that something else other than their anxious expectation might or could happen.

Goal	What does my child expect will happen?	What does my child need to learn?

Here are some questions that might help you:

- *Is the feared outcome as likely to happen as your child thinks it is?*
- *If the feared outcome does happen, will it be as bad as they think it will be?*
- *Might they cope better than they think they will?*

There are some examples to guide you on page 105.

Hopefully you now have an idea about what your child might need to learn to achieve the goal you are focusing on. If you haven't quite figured it out, don't worry; it probably means that you haven't yet figured out what your child is expecting to happen. You can still test out your initial ideas in the next steps. You might make some new discoveries along the way which will make what your child needs to learn clearer or may suggest that they need to learn something different from what you first thought – that is perfectly OK.