

# Anxiety: Teach the Skill of Having a Plan

**Avoid...** Not telling your child of anxiety-provoking events in advance. You are denying the child the opportunity to practice coping skills (like tolerating distress, coming up with a plan for success, etc.)

**Instead...**

- a) Help the child develop a plan for success ahead of time (focus on what TO DO, rather than on what NOT to do).
- b) It doesn't matter how scared the child was, reward them for following the plan.
- c) The plan can be quite simple....1-2 items!

## DEVELOPING AND USING COGNITIVE COPING CARDS

An important tool in your child's anxiety toolbox is the ability to change anxious thoughts to more relaxed and balanced thinking. With practice, your child can learn to use coping thoughts on his or her own. Cognitive coping cards are small index cards with short sentences of some of the coping skills your child can use when experiencing anxiety. The cards are portable reminders to boss back anxiety!

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Step 1: Make sure your child is involved**

In order for coping cards to be useful, your child needs to feel that the coping statements will actually be personally helpful!

### **Step 2: Make it a game!**

Have fun trying to come up with good statements that your child will find helpful in managing his or her anxiety. Here are some ways you can make this tool a fun task:

- Get the family involved!
- Make it an art project!

### **Step 3: Remember to praise your child**

As always, it is very important that you give lots of praise whenever your child is successful at managing anxiety, or when he or she tried to manage anxiety (but was not quite able to do it).

