# Understanding Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

When worry becomes more than “just a phase”

## What is GAD?

We all worry sometimes—but when worry feels constant, uncontrollable, and interferes with daily life, it could be Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

**Children and teens with GAD often:**

- Worry about school performance, family, safety, or the future
- Seek reassurance constantly ( “Are you sure everything’s okay?”)
- Have trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Avoid activities due to fear of failure or embarrassment

This worry is chronic, and not always tied to a specific event—it’s more like a constant hum in the background of their minds.

## Signs to Watch for

- Frequent physical complaints (tummy aches, headaches, fatigue)
- Trouble concentrating or seeming distracted
- Avoidance of new situations or social settings
- Irritability, restlessness, or being easily upset
- Perfectionism and fear of making mistakes
- Reassurance-seeking: asking “what if” questions over and over

These signs often show up quietly—and are easy to miss in children who seem “well-behaved” or academically focused.

## Where Does GAD Come From?

GAD can be caused by a mix of:

- Genetics (family history of anxiety or mood disorders)
- Brain chemistry (imbalances in serotonin/dopamine)
- Environmental stress (divorce, school transitions, illness, etc.)
- Personality traits like sensitivity or being highly empathetic

Remember: it’s not a parenting failure. It’s a mental health condition—and treatable.

## What Can Help?

- **Routine & predictability**

Knowing what to expect reduces anxiety

- **Coping tools**

Deep breathing, journaling, grounding techniques

- **Limit reassurance loops**

Instead of saying “It’ll be fine,” try, “What could help you feel more prepared?”

- **Therapy**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is highly effective for GAD

- **Movement & sleep**

Consistent physical activity and proper rest support emotional regulation

## When to Seek Help?

If your child’s worry is affecting their sleep, school performance, friendships, or daily activities—it’s time to check in with a professional

**Support can make all the difference.**

## A Note From Dr. Baweja

Anxiety can make a child feel like their mind is running a marathon while standing still. You’re not alone—and neither is your child.

- With the right support, children with GAD can learn to manage their worry, build resilience, and thrive.