

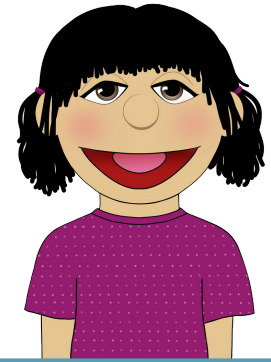
# ACTIVITY: MAKE A WORRY BOX



**EPILEPSY**  
Toronto  
See the Person



When a child continues to think about a worry over and over, their anxiety can start to grow and make it hard to focus on other things. Teaching children to share their worries helps them learn to express how they are feeling and develop healthy ways to cope with big emotions. How do you encourage kids to talk about their worries while not dwelling on them too much? A great way to do this is by making a worry box.



## WHAT TO DO

1. Explain that you will be making a worry box, which is a special place to write down worries and keep them safe.
2. Present the box or container and engage your child in decorating the box.
3. Invite your child to identify a worry they may have, and write this worry down on a slip of paper. Explore the worry with your child and validate their feelings about it.
4. Put the worry in the box. Talk about how you will keep the box somewhere safe.
5. The idea is to arrange a specified time during the week for your child to talk about worry. They will know that they can feel safe talking about how they are feeling, and be encouraged to limit “worry time” to when the worry box is taken out.

## WHAT YOU NEED

- Any small box or container, such as a tissue box or coffee canister
- Items to decorate the box (markers, stickers, etc)
- Small pieces of paper
- Pencil or marker

## How should I respond to my child when they share a worry?

The most helpful response is to validate how your child is feeling. This means acknowledging the feeling without dismissing it or immediately suggesting solutions.

Some ways to validate include:

1. Acknowledge the presence of a strong emotion (“It seems that something is bothering you”)
2. Name the emotion your child is experiencing (“It sounds like you are feeling worried”)
3. Normalize the emotion (“Many kids feel that way when they think about school”)
4. Acknowledge that it is understandable to experience that emotion (“It might be scary to think about what could happen”)

Often, simply validating and acknowledging the child’s worry helps reduce the distress they are experiencing, and they become able to problem solve on their own. If problem solving is needed, work as a partner with your child and support them in identifying their own solutions.