

When they ask again

Answering reassurance seeking without feeding it, and without being cold

Reassurance brings relief for a short while, and then the question comes back, usually a little more urgently. The aim is not to refuse your child. It is to stop supplying the answer while staying completely available to them.

Two parts to it: say that you understand, and say what you believe they can do. Then stay, and do not answer the question again.

The shape of a reply

- Name what they are feeling, in their words, not yours.
- Say plainly that you are not going to answer it again, and why, in one short sentence.
- Say what you think they can manage.
- Stay with them. Change what you are doing together, not whether you are there.

Writing your own

What they usually ask

What I usually say

What I will say instead, in my own words

What I will do while they are upset

What to expect

It usually gets louder before it gets quieter. A child who has always been answered will ask harder when the answer stops coming, often for several days. That is a sign the change has registered, not a sign it is going wrong. If your child becomes aggressive or talks about hurting themselves, keep everyone safe first and get professional help before going further, and in an emergency call 999.

Consistency matters more than getting the wording right. If both parents answer differently, the questions go to whoever answers.

A worksheet, not treatment, advice about your situation or a diagnosis. It is best used alongside a qualified clinician. If using it makes things worse, stop and speak to your GP or clinician, and in an emergency call 999. Written by Anxiety CBT Ltd and free to print for personal or clinical use, unchanged and with this footer left on. Not for sale. © 2026 Anxiety CBT Ltd · Dr Daniel O'Rourke · anxietycbt.co.uk/resources/reassurance-responses