

What do children fear and why

1. Babies experience stranger anxiety, clinging to parents when confronted by people they don't recognize.
 - a. **Fear of strangers**

What She's Thinking: I don't know who you are or what you want from me, so I'm sticking close to Mom.

How to Help: "Fear of strangers is a healthy, protective fear -- children should not go to people they don't know," Dr. Ayelet Talmi says. You should give your child time to get to know someone before expecting her to interact and be friendly to them. Be by your child's side as she interacts with new people, and model friendly behaviors yourself.
2. Toddlers around 10 to 18 months old experience separation anxiety, becoming emotionally distressed when one or both parents leave.
 - a. **Fear of separation**

What He's Thinking: Why are you leaving me? What if you never come back?

How to Help: It's normal for toddlers to become anxious or afraid when their primary caregivers leave. "Always leave your child with a familiar caregiver, and have the same brief good-bye routine each time you go," Dr. Ayelet Talmi says. Help your child get involved in an activity before you leave. Be sure to tell him good-bye and not just sneak away. Once you leave, make every effort not to go back as this might disrupt your child's transition.
 - b. **Fear of being alone**

What She's Thinking: I feel safe when you're in the room with me, and I don't like you going out of my sight.

How to Help: Sit away from your child in a different part of the room, then try being in separate rooms where she can still see and hear you for short periods of time (about 30 seconds). Do this until you can finally be in separate rooms without upsetting her.
3. Kids ages 4 through 6 have anxiety about things that aren't based in reality, such as fears of monsters and ghosts.
 - a. **Fear of the dark**

What He's Thinking: I can't see what's out there and I feel unprotected in the dark.

How to Help: Try teaching your child how to turn on lights around the house, add a night-light to his bedroom and gradually decrease it over time," Dr. Ayelet Talmi suggests. Help your child understand darkness by going on a night walk together and discussing all the new and interesting things you can see when it's dark.
 - b. **Fear of monsters**

What He's Thinking: Anything could be lurking under my bed and waiting to hurt me.

How to Help: Toddlers have vivid imaginations that conjure up monsters in dark corners, shadows, clouds, etc. Take his concerns seriously and help him prevent monster visits. For example, check under the bed, in the closet, and in all corners for existing monsters then tack a "No Monsters Allowed" sign to his door and ensure your child that monsters cannot hurt him once this is done.
 - c. **Fear of bad dreams**

What She's Thinking: I'm afraid to sleep alone because I sometimes have nightmares.

How to Help: Comfort your child after a nightmare with a favorite blanket or stuffed animal, and reassure her that she is safe and you're always there to help. If your child has persistent, very intense nightmares, talk to your doctor.

d. Fear of masks, costumes, & mascots

What She's Thinking: Big and crazy-looking costumes scare me because I don't understand them and don't know who -- if anyone -- is behind the mask.

How to Help: It is caused by the disproportion and novelty. Never force your child to interact with someone she are afraid of, and consider having people in costumes remove their masks to reassure her there is a friendly face inside. You can also help your child adjust to the idea of people in costumes by playing dress-up with her.

e. Fear of toilet and bathroom

What He's Thinking: The toilet is loud and I'm afraid of falling in. I'd rather not go into the bathroom at all.

How to Help: Young children, especially those who are beginning potty-training, are often afraid of numerous things concerning toilets and bathrooms. Loud flushes, water disappearing down the drain, and other mechanical functions can be frightening. "Show your child how things work and allow him to practice." Dr. Ayelet Talmi says.

4. Kids ages 7 through 12 often have fears that reflect real circumstances that may happen to them, such as bodily injury and natural disaster.

a. Fear of weather

What She's Thinking: Loud noises and howling wind is scary -- I need Mom and Dad to protect me.

How to Help: Help your child understand weather and even enjoy it. "Play outside in various conditions so your child can feel what it's like when it's windy or rainy," Dr. Ayelet Talmi suggests. Develop a bad-weather plan as a family so your child has some control over the situation.

b. Fear of doctors

What She's Thinking: I don't like my doctor because she gives me shots and takes my blood and it hurts.

How to Help: Prepare your child in advance for the type of procedures she will experience, stay with your child during procedures and offer a small reward for her cooperation with medical procedures.

In conclusion, keep these tips in mind to help your child learn to manage fear on his own:

- 1) Gently expose your child to things that might be scary to him. Coach him and model how to stay calm.
- 2) Explain to your toddler what is real, what is pretend, and how things that might be scary actually work.
- 3) Tell your toddler the truth if you know something bad is going to happen. He'll learn to confront fears and trusting you to tell the truth.
- 4) Manage your own fears, worries, and anxieties without sharing them with your child.
- 5) Read books and tell stories, young children love to hear about other children overcoming adversity and will likely emulate strong characters.

Source:

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/anxiety.html#>

<http://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/fear/top-toddler-fears/>