



Helping Your Child Deal with Fear



It isn't always easy to know how to help a child cope with fear. There are so many types of fear and so many different solutions that it is difficult to know exactly how to help.

Below are a few basic principles.

- Know your child. (Is there a sudden change in mood or behavior? Is there a pattern? Know what upsets him.)
- Listen to your child.
- Talk in a calming voice.
- Hold your child, if that helps.
- Tell about a time you were afraid, how you coped, and how your fears were often worse than the actual concern.
- Don't punish the child for being afraid.
- Talk to your child's teachers for ideas and share your ideas with them.
- If the fear persists, talk to your child's doctor.
- Offer distractions such as exercise, playing a game, reading together, etc.
- Limit your child's exposure to violent or scary books, video games and movies.
- Pray with your child.
- Be patient – what may seem irrational to you may be very real to your child.

A few projects:

- Ask your child to draw a picture of their fear. Some children express themselves better through art.
- Ask your children to write their fear (dentist, monster, storm, etc.) on a piece of paper. Put their fear inside a box marked "God's hands."
- Share Psalm 27:1. How do you feel when Mom or Dad is with you? (safe, happy, etc.) Someone greater can be with you all the time. God has promised never to leave us (Hebrews 13:5b). Encourage them to repeat the phrase, "God is with me."
- Make a sign with your child (preferably with glow in the dark paint) that says, "God is with me!" Hang it in your child's room where they can see it often.

