

Tools for the Journey

Dealing with Nightmares



National Center
for Fathering

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Listen and understand.

Never make fun of your child for being scared. Reassure him that everything is going to be okay.

Have fun in the dark!

Playing flashlight tag, hide and seek or having a glow-in-the dark scavenger hunt will help make being in the dark fun.

Get a nightlight.

Getting a nightlight can help eliminate fears-whether it is of monsters or the dark. Make sure it doesn't prevent sleep though!

Leave the door cracked.

Shutting the door can oftentimes make your child feel isolated from you, leave the door cracked to break down that barrier.

Avoid scary television.

Even if you enjoy the horror genre, make sure you aren't allowing scary television or movies to play in the house as you deal with nightmares.

Be honest.

Were you scared of the dark when you were a child? Then be open about that with your child! Talk about how you overcame that fear.

Set limits.

By keeping your child in her bed at night, she will be forced to find out for herself that she really is safe.

Use a bedtime routine.

Alter your child's bedtime routine to be reassuring and calming to create a more peaceful atmosphere.

Talk during the day.

Let the day light make talking about your child's fear make it less frightening. This will help your child relax and build self-confidence.