



## Common Fears in Older Children

As your child gets older, you'll find that they will grow out of many of the fears that marked their toddler years - to be replaced by a more sophisticated brand of fear. Most will be rooted in the real world - death, getting lost, divorce or separation of their parents, burglary, house fire - but some will remain in the imaginary world - ghosts, monsters that come out in the dark.

### **How Can I Help My Child Overcome Their Fears?**

- Listen to them and make sure that they know that you are taking their fears seriously.
- Don't lie to them. If they ask you tricky questions about war, death, or divorce, give them a truthful answer - you don't need to give them more information than they need so don't elaborate if they are satisfied with a simple answer.
- Don't indulge their fantasies by fighting with the monsters in their room - by doing this, you're actually telling them that you too believe that there are monsters in their bedroom.
- With gentle guidance, encourage them to slowly face their fears - when they do eventually overcome their fear, they will feel as though they have achieved a great deal.
- If locking the bedroom window, sleeping with a night-light, or crossing the road to avoid a dog allows them to deal with their fear, then let them make these choices. By designing their own method of dealing with these fears, you are allowing them to make independent decisions about how to overcome them and move forward.

### **REMEMBER!**

Many children are frightened of things that we, as adults, struggle to understand. Whatever the fear - no matter how irrational - it is very real to your child so never make fun of them and don't force them to confront it if they are not ready to.