Children’s Books to Help Preschoolers Cope With Fears

When your child experiences fear, whether it's in the dark of night or the light of day, nothing means more than your loving support and guidance. It's quite a gift to be someone's sense of security and safety. But oh, what a daunting responsibility, too! When kids struggle with fear, it makes you feel like you need a psychology degree just to get through each day!

Rest assured, you can meet this challenge, being able to sensitively take into account children's points of view helps immensely. This column offers one method of helping kids sort out and cope with fears: read to them!

Read books that feature characters your child can relate to — characters who face a similar fear, who cope with it, and ultimately conquer their fears. Books allow children to stand back from their fears and to ponder them more objectively. They provide kids anonymity so they can talk about the character's feelings without talking directly about their own. Any way you look at it, the snuggle time during reading can only help what's ailing.

As your child tries to gain some control over fear, you can also read books that provide factual information about experiences. Kids may be dreading getting a shot, having a cavity filled, or moving away. There are books that explain the basic processes and vocabulary associated with those experiences to help children have a clearer idea about what to expect. Such preparation makes a world of difference. Books may answer questions your child is afraid to ask. They can clear up misconceptions your child secretly holds as well.

When reading a book together, young children may just want to curl up and listen. A little later they may begin to reflect and then comment on the character's feelings and decisions. To create situations during which either can happen, consider the following picture books, written for children up to age 8. I hope they will help when your child's life gets a little bumpy.

FEAR OF FAILURE

MOVING TO A NEW HOME


### Separation Anxiety


• *You Go Away* by Dorothy Corey. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman, 1999.


• *I'm Lost* by Elizabeth Crary. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, 1996.


### Loss of Love


### Bullies & Teasing


### Bedtime Noises, Monsters, Naps


• *I Hate To Go To Bed!* by Katie Davis. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1999.


STARTING SCHOOL

OVERCOMING FEAR WITH COURAGE

STORM FEARS

WAR FEARS

CRIME, FIRE, AND BOMBING FEARS

DOCTOR AND HOSPITAL FEARS

DENTIST FEARS

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