



Helping toddlers cope with fears

How much "scary stuff" can young children handle? Some children like scary stuff, and some hate it. Movies with fearsome images, intense danger, loud noises, and -- above all -- blood and gore can create all sorts of problems, so it's wise to take it slowly. Children younger than 7 can't easily distinguish between fantasy and reality, even if you tell them it's not real. You will know if children have become too frightened when they start having sleep problems, irrational fears, and obsessions with, for example, zombies.

Disturbing images and sounds can affect vulnerable children for years. When scary surprises, such as the one at the beginning of *Finding Nemo*, crop up suddenly in a movie, check in with the kids. Because they're caught up in the emotion of fear, they may miss the fact that a scene has a safe resolution. Feel free to leave turn off a show if you think it is agitating. Talk about it, comfort the child, and use it as a gauge for next time. These tips can help:

- **Choose with care.** Children over 5 may like haunted houses, mysteries, and things popping out everywhere, but stick to animation, which helps them realize it's fantasy. Be careful with monsters, skeletons, aliens, and zombies. Avoid any dangerous material involving characters near their age.
- **Avoid shows/movies and books in which characters use violence to resolve conflict.** But if it comes up, talk about alternative ways that characters could have solved a problem.

Ways to help with Halloween fears:

- **Don't minimize the child's fears.** It is helpful to let children know that you understand their fears. Halloween can be a scary holiday. Toddlers are just making sense of their world. We might think decapitated monsters and bloody eye balls are festive – but to a toddler it is pure terror. Toddlers have a harder time differentiating between reality and fantasy – making Halloween a real life horror movie. Add masks and costumes to the mix and you've got a holiday full of nightmares – literally.
- **Start preparing your child for Halloween early.** It is impossible to keep children in a bubble for the entire month of October. Instead of avoiding Halloween, help prepare children for the holiday. Tell the children that during Halloween people find it fun to dress up like scary things. Let them know that the monsters and scary creatures they will see are not real. If you see scary decorations in the shops – demystify them by letting your child hold them and see how fake they feel.
- **Save the bloody zombies for another year.** To help children get acclimated to Halloween – keep your decorations festive and spook-free. Pumpkins, friendly witches and cute ghosts are all toddler-friendly decorations.
- **Talk to their parents.** Help parents better prepare their children by sharing with them what you have learned about the specific needs/fears their child has.

Halloween is a fun, exciting holiday. Once children move through their fears – they will see this holiday for what it really is – free candy. And who can be scared of that!

Source: www.common sense media.org & www.anxioustoddlers.com

Program Reminders/ Updates

Water: Do you have water available to children? Please be sure to offer children water throughout the day; especially on hot days and in the winter when it is dry outside. Children get de-hydrated easily and may not remember to ask for water. But, remember, water cannot compete with milk at Breakfast/Lunch/Supper. Consider offering water at snacks when milk is not required.

Menu Ideas – Meatless Mondays

Breakfast

Oatmeal	Crepes	WW Toast	Cheerios	Cott. Chz. Pancakes
Apples	Bananas	Spinach & mushrooms	Strawberries	Blueberries
Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %

Lunch or Dinner

*Pumpkin Apple Beans *	Ground turkey	Chicken strips HM	Tuna	Ground beef burgers
Brown rice	WW spaghetti	WW Tortilla	WW Bread	WW Roll
Carrot sticks	Tomato sauce HM	Nopal Salad	Butternut Squash	Arugula Salad
Cantaloupe	Apples	Cantaloupe	Persimmons	Pears - sauteed
Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %	Milk 1 %

Snack Am or Pm

Yogurt plain	Peanut butter	WW Crackers	Cauliflower	Baked Beans
Mixed fruit	celery	Mandarins	Yogurt dip	Ww saltines

** Pumpkin Apple Baked Beans **



Ingredients:

- 6 cups cooked white navy beans or great northern beans (about 2 cups / 1 pound dry beans)
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 1 cup of bean cooking water
- 1 apple cored and cubed
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (optional)
- 1 small head of garlic, minced
- 1Tbsp dijon mustard
- 2 cups sweet apple cider
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 cups peeled pumpkin flesh
- 2 Tbsp molasses
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup butter
- Salt & pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Soak the dry beans for 12 hours, making sure there is at least 3 inches of water above the beans. Drain the beans and place them in a saucepan filled with enough water to cover 2 inches above the beans. Simmer the beans on medium-low heat for 1 to 2 hours, until tender and fully cooked. Drain the beans but reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid.
2. In a large dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot, sauté the onions in the olive oil until soft and translucent. Turn the heat to low and add the tomato paste, molasses, honey, dijon mustard, minced garlic, and pumpkin purée. Cook for a few minutes, stirring well until smooth. Whisk in the apple cider and add the beans and reserved cup of cooking liquid. Mix well.
3. To cook the beans, you can either simmer them on your stovetop on low heat or bake them in the oven at 300F. Cook them for one hour, and then add the chopped pumpkin, chopped apple, and the butter. Cook them for another 1 to 2 hours, or until the beans have reached the desired consistency. If you prefer your baked beans to be very thick, you can remove the lid for the final hour of cooking so that more liquid evaporates (in which case give them a stir every now and again to make sure they don't burn at the bottom). In the last hour, you can add the salt and pepper and make any flavor adjustments needed. For instance, I sometimes add an extra tablespoon of molasses if I find they aren't as sweet as I would like. Serve warm.

Yield: 8 servings 3-5 year olds **Meets requirement:** meat/meat alternate at lunch/super.

Source: Kitchen Vignettes

Activity Corner

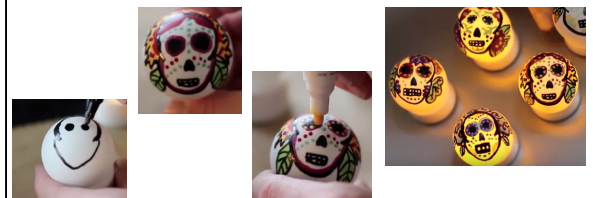
Day of the Dead Candle Magnets

Supplies: Ping pong balls, scissors, hot glue gun, paint pens, battery tea lights, a thumbtack, & magnets.



Instructions:

- 1) Punch a hole in a ping pong ball with the thumbtack
- 2) Use scissors to make the hole opening larger
- 3) Hot glue around entire edge of hole
- 4) Insert tea light flame into the hole and press firmly
- 5) Hot glue a magnet to the back of the light
- 6) Draw a skull on the ping pong ball
- 7) Decorate the skull with flowers & leaves
- 8) Add dots for finishing touches



Source: <http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/day-dead-candle-magnets-video/>

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