



confronting nightmares

How to help your child

Respond immediately but don't belittle the experience by saying, "It was only a dream." A nightmare is real to children. Trivializing it won't make it less scary.

Don't try to interpret the dream. Listen to the details attentively but avoid making a big fuss. Instead say, "You've had a bad dream. Everything is fine now, let's go back to sleep."

If your child brings up the dream the next day, suggest drawing a picture of the dream. If it's on paper, the child will feel more in control of scary feelings.

Be alert to activities that can trigger nightmares like television and movie images, or unresolved anxiety resulting from a new teacher, death, or fantasy characters and monsters.