

SOMETHING TO DO IN THE DARK

Here are some activities to make the dark fun, familiar, and friendly

Sparking Smiles

Go into a completely dark closet. Bring a friend, a mirror, and a fresh roll of WintOGreen Lifesavers. Give your eyes a few minutes to adjust, and then crunch a Lifesaver in your teeth while smiling. You will see sparks fly around your teeth! This is caused by TRIBOLUMINESCENCE— a by-product produced when sugar crystals get crushed.

Want to know more? Go to http://chemistry.about.com/cs/howthingswork/a/aa060601a_2.htm

My Glow-In-The-Dark Park

Create a painting with glow-in-the-dark paints. Paint a park, zoo, underwater or other scene together with your child. Hang the finished painting in your child's room, turn out the light and take turns talking about the scene as a bedtime story.

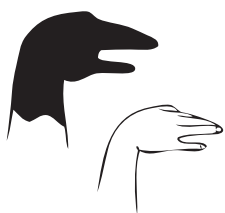
Star Light, Star Bright

Create a night sky in your child's room by using glow-in-the-dark star stickers available at most novelty and toy stores. Adhere the stars to the walls and/or ceiling, allowing your child to direct the design and help as much as possible. Or, take a large sheet of poster board that your child can decorate with the stars and then put it up on the wall. This is a wonderful way to transition to the dark—stargaze in your very own room!

Go to www.stardate.org/resources/constellations to see some constellations, or else just design your own imaginary night sky.

Shifting Shadows

Hand shadows are an entertaining way to show how easily our eyes are fooled. All you need is a bright spotlight (like a desk lamp) and a blank white wall.



Goose



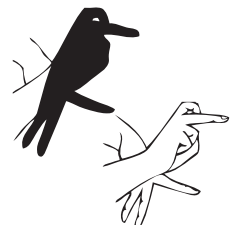
Snail



Dog



Panther



Bird

THERE'S SOMETHING UNDER MY BED!

A Parent's Guide to Managing Imaginary Monsters

Fear is a natural human emotion. It helps us to learn to stay safe. Most children have natural fears and some things are more frightening at certain ages than others. For example;

- Infants are frightened by things that startle them, such as loud sudden noises or unanticipated motion.
- Toddlers are often afraid of the dark or new situations.
- Preschoolers have many imaginary fears. Monsters and other pretend creatures may seem very real to a child this age.

What can I do to help my child?

Listen to your child. Don't dismiss his or her fears. Let your child know you are confident there isn't any threat, but that you do understand s/he is feeling afraid. A simple "I know you are afraid of the dark, but I also know that there is nothing in the dark that can hurt you" can work wonders. Avoid dwelling on the fear. Giving too much time and attention to the fear may undermine your own reassuring words.

If the child's fears persist, help him or her to feel some control over the situation. A favorite blanket or toy can make the child feel safer, as can a nightlight in the room or a flashlight near the bed. Keep in mind that it is natural for children to obsess about a fear for several weeks. This is part of the child's desire to master the fear. If your child's fear does not diminish after a few months or becomes a constant issue even during daylight hours, seek professional help.

Books to Read Together

- The Monster at the End of This Book* Jon Stone
There's Something Under My Bed Paul Prokop
There are Monsters Everywhere Mercer Mayer
There's an Alligator Under My Bed Mercer Mayer
Go To Bed, Monster! Natasha Wing
The Monster Bed Jeanne Willis
The Boy Under the Bed McClear/ Dollak
Go Away Big Green Monster! Ed Emberly



MEMORIAL HALL
FAIRMOUNT PARK