



## Conquering Fear

With Halloween just around the corner and all the spooky, scary decorations making their way into the community, there is no better time to address the concept of this concept fear than now. Fear is the word we use to describe our emotional reaction to something that appears to be dangerous and to name the feeling when people are afraid of something. Fear is a vital emotional response to physical and emotional danger and has played a huge role throughout human evolution when there were constant life-or-death situations. While the stakes are lower in today's day and age, fear remains a common emotional experience amongst all individuals.

As parents, you might notice these fears in your children towards different situations such as public speaking, social interactions, watching scary movies, the dark or even spiders and heights. However, most fears do not persist or cause disruptions to everyday life and can be addressed with adequate support and guidance. Here are some ways that you as parents can help children overcome their fears:

1. **Gain a Knowledge about their fear:** Knowledge is a powerful antidote to fear. Understanding the source of fears can often diminish their impact. Having an open and non-judgmental conversation with your children about their fears.

**Children between the ages of 4 and 10** may struggle to express their fears and asking specific questions can help you understand them more. For example, if they are afraid of the dark, you could ask them "What makes you afraid of the dark"

**Children above the age of 11** may struggle with thoughts that their fears would be mocked. It is always important to initiate the conversations with your observations of their fear and give them space to express their fears without making comments such as Oh come on, that wasn't scary!" try, "I understand why that might have made you afraid"

2. **Gradual Exposure:** Encourage your child to confront their fears by taking tiny steps. For instance, if they fear public speaking, they could first practice in front of their toys or a few family members and gradually increase the exposure if they succeed. During this exposure, always provide positive feedback and encouragement. **Do not** force them to face their fear head on as it would have the opposite effect.





3. **Mindfulness and relaxation:** These techniques can help children stay grounded in the present, reducing anxiety about the future. Try the following themed mindfulness techniques with your children the next time they experience fear.

## Blowing autumn leaves

Take a deep breath in through your nose.

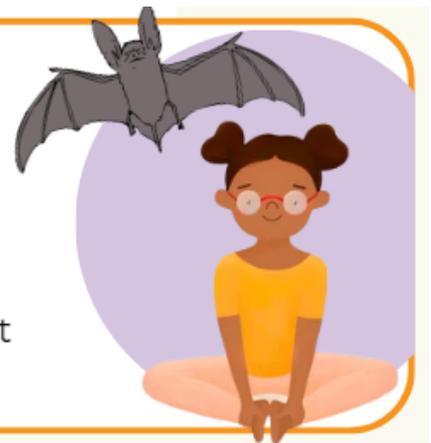
As you breathe out through your mouth, imagine that you are blowing a pile of leaves around the room.



## Bat Wings Yoga

Sit on the floor with your back straight and the soles of your feet together.

Then bounce your knees up and down like a bat flapping its wings.



4. **Know when to seek support:** While most children eventually overcome their fears, if you believe that their fear is a big concern or persists for long periods of times, do not hesitate to get in contact with external support such as the school counsellors or therapists who will be able to support and guide you with these concerns.

**Remember, fear may always be a part of our lives, but adequate strategies and support, we can navigate and help our children navigate it more effectively, thus embracing a path towards fearlessness.**

### Want to know more? Try these resources:

- **About fear:** <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/anxiety.html>
- **Positive affirmations for kids:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ryCIBMDwKO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ryCIBMDwKO)
- **Overcoming fear for teens:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDjwfFmXwfE>

