



Jill Spivack's Tips on dealing with *your* child's Nightmares and Night Terrors

SOLUTIONS FOR DECREASING NIGHTMARES:

- 1) TRY TO KEEP STRESS TO A MINIMUM
- 2) AVOID SCARY MOVIES, TV AND BOOKS
- 3) LEAVE THE LIGHTS ON AND THE DOORS OPEN
- 4) MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP--SLEEP DEPRIVATION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO NIGHTMARES
- 5) OFFER REASSURANCE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT-REMIND YOUR CHILD HE IS SAFE AND THAT YOU'RE NEARBY--A QUICK HUG IS FINE BUT TRY NOT TO REINFORCE THE FEARS BY STAYING IN THE ROOM THE WHOLE NIGHT.
- 6) IF THERE IS A MAJOR EVENT OR ISSUE IN THE CHILD'S LIFE AND NIGHTMARES ARE FREQUENT AND ONGOING, IT MAY BE USEFUL TO SEEK COUNSELING FOR YOUR CHILD TO HELP HIM MOVE THROUGH THE ISSUES IN A SUPPORTIVE, THERAPEUTIC ENVIRONMENT.

SOLUTIONS FOR HANDLING NIGHT TERRORS:

- 1) STAY NEAR YOUR CHILD BUT DON'T WAKE HIM FROM THE NIGHT TERROR
- 2) TRY TO REDUCE STRESS IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE
- 3) KEEP BEDTIME AND WAKE UP TIME FAIRLY CONSTANT. DON'T ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO SWING WILDLY IN WHEN HE GOES TO BED OR WAKES IN THE MORNING.
- 3) WATCH FOR OVER-FATIGUE--KEEP BEDTIME EARLY SO YOUR CHILD ISN'T GETTING OVERTIRED... THIS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO NIGHT TERRORS
- 4) UNDERSTAND THAT SOME CHILDREN ARE PRONE TO NIGHT TERRORS AND THAT THEY WILL OUTGROW THEM AT SOME POINT.

*PARENTS ARE MORE FRIGHTENED BY NIGHT TERRORS THAN THE CHILDREN THEMSELVES. KIDS DON'T REMEMBER THE NIGHT TERROR THE NEXT MORNING AND THE EPISODES ARE NOT PSYCHOLOGICALLY BASED.