

How to respond to your child's fears

“I’m afraid.” When your child says these words, it can be hard to know how to respond. Here are four tips for what to say when your child is scared.

Gather information	What to say
 <p>Ask questions. Some kids have trouble explaining what they're feeling — or why. You may need to be very specific.</p>	<p>“What are you afraid of?”</p> <p>“Is there someone you're afraid of at school?”</p> <p>“Are you afraid you're falling behind in class?”</p>
Show empathy	What to say
 <p>Tell your child that you understand feeling scared, even if you haven't been afraid of the exact same thing. Don't dismiss the fear.</p>	<p>“I understand that's scary for you.”</p> <p>“Lots of kids worry about that.”</p> <p>“When I was a kid, I worried about things like that, too.”</p>
Problem-solve together	What to say
 <p>Let your child know that you'll work together to make a plan. Focus on the things you can control.</p>	<p>“Let's see if we can find a way to help you with this.”</p> <p>“Why don't we make a list of all the things we can do to make this less scary. We can....”</p>
Give reassurance	What to say
 <p>Let your child know that you'll help. Calm your child with a big hug or snuggle time.</p>	<p>“I'm here for you.”</p> <p>“You've got this. We've got this.”</p>