

# Monster “Smash” Exercise

Helping a child overcome the fear of monsters at bedtime requires patience, empathy, and creativity. Here are some steps you can take:

1. Listen and Validate: Start by acknowledging your child's fear without dismissing it. Let them know that it's normal to be afraid sometimes, but reassure them that they are safe.
2. Reality Check: Gently explain that monsters are not real, and are just part of stories or movies. Try to help them differentiate between reality and imagination.
3. Turn on the Light: Use a night light or leave the hallway light on with the bedroom door slightly open. Light can reduce the fear associated with darkness.
4. Comfort Items: Allow your child to sleep with a favorite toy or blanket that provides them with extra comfort.
5. Bedtime Routine: Stick to a soothing bedtime routine which can include reading a calm story, talking about the positive events of the day, and giving lots of hugs and reassurance.
6. Monster “Mash” Exercise {below}: Using the below, sit as a family at the table, printing out everyone a blank monster template. Have each member, draw a monster face, including you. Then, pass them around and have each member color something funny onto someone's mask. When done, cut them out, attach a string or popsicle stick, and turn on the monster mash song. Have a dance party, wear your masks and take a scary memory to make it a funny one.

Remember, fears often decrease with age, so provide reassurance and understanding as they navigate this fear.



