

Bibliotherapy: Separation Anxiety

by

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PARENTS

Feiner, J. & Yost, G. (1988). *Taming monsters, slaying dragons*. New York, NY: Arbor

House.

Taming Monsters, Slaying Dragons is a reference book suitable for parents with children who suffer from childhood fears. The book covers childhood fears along the continuum from normal, everyday fears to more intense fears children may experience. Other topics include family systems, effective communication with children, and a history of fear behaviors. Most importantly, this book gives parents tips for when and where to seek help for their children's fears.

Joel Feiner is a professor of psychiatry at Southwestern University. His primary area of research is at-risk youth, particularly with co-occurring substance abuse. Graham Yost has written numerous nonfiction works about a wide variety of topics.

Foa, E.B. & Andrews, L.W. (2006). *If your adolescent has an anxiety disorder: an essential resource for parents*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

This resource book for parents does not only focus on Separation Anxiety, it also includes chapters for Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This book offers parents an overview of Separation Anxiety and how it

manifests in adolescent-age children. In both the introduction as well as the diagnostic section, readers can learn about the signs of Separation Anxiety in children. The introduction, as well as the concluding chapters, offers parents advice on the importance of treatment, treatment options, and how to locate help. Throughout the book, parents offer advice and insight regarding their own experiences with their children. The glossary is a helpful tool that clearly defines the important words and concepts found in the book. Additionally, the authors have included lists of resources and suggestions for further reading, which are broken down into sections to help parents locate more information to supplement what is in the book.

Edna B. Foa is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania where she serves as the director of the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety. After graduating from the University of Missouri with her Ph.D. in clinical psychology and personality, Foa went on to become one of the world's leading experts in anxiety disorders, specifically Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Manassis, K. (1996). *Keys to parenting your anxious child*. New York, NY: Barron's Education Series.

Written for parents, this book begins with an overview of anxiety, especially anxieties that are specific to children. Part 2 offers a variety of ways to

help your child cope with anxiety. Some suggestions include offering incentives, stress reduction techniques, confidence building techniques, and medications that have proven useful in reducing stress. Part 3 addresses specific problem behaviors related to anxiety in children, including clinginess, school refusal, and shyness, as well as tips for handling them. The final part offers suggestions on how to handle reactions to negative behaviors from others in the community as well as where to look for additional support for families and children.

Katharina Manassis is an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto. She also serves as director of the Anxiety Disorders Program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto as well as being a member of the human development and applied psychology department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She has been published extensively in scientific journals. She has also written another book for parents which focuses on depression in teenagers.

BOOKS TO READ WITH CHILDREN

Cora, C. (2011). *A suitcase surprise for mommy*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young

Readers.

Written by a mother of four boys, this picture book is suitable for younger children who are facing a separation from caregivers for an extended period of

time. It offers a nice suggestion to help children deal with separation from their parents. In the book Zoran's mommy has to travel for work, but he does not want her to go. Mommy has an idea – Zoran can find something special for her to take so they can remember one another. Zoran spends the day trying to find the perfect thing to send with his mommy. Even when he misses mommy, he feels better knowing she is thinking of him.

Gershator, P. (2004). *The baby-sitter sings*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co.

The author uses “slumber-songs” from Africa, Spain, and the Caribbean to write a flowing and comforting picture book for young children that addresses their sadness and worry when mom and dad leave them with a baby-sitter. The vibrant pictures and rhymes within the book make it captivating for children of many ages.

Phillis Gershator has been an avid reader from a young age. Her love of books led her to become a librarian first in Brooklyn and later in St. Thomas. Over the years, she has written many different articles, reviews, and poetry. Her real love is children's literature and her first children's book was published in 1979. Since then, she has gone on to publish over 30 children's books and early reader chapter books.

Herman, G. (2004). *The barker twins: The big sleepover*. New York, NY: Penguin Young Reader's Group.

This picture book is geared toward beginning school-age children who are beginning to spend more time with friends and away from their families. The author, Gail Herman, has traveled extensively throughout the United States as well as abroad, teaching professionals at festivals and schools how to use story telling as a tool for young children's expression. In the past, she has taught children in elementary school, in gifted programs, as well as at the university level in numerous different states. Currently, she holds a teaching position at three separate universities.

In this book, twins Moffie and Morgie normally do everything together. When Morgie is invited to a sleepover at his friend's house, Moffie gets upset and wonders what she will do without her bother to play with or go through their bedtime routine. Moffie is angry when Morgie leaves but soon finds ways to occupy herself, such as reading to her baby brother or spending time alone with mom and dad.

Huebner, D. & Matthews, B. (2005). *What to do when you worry too much: A kid's guide to overcoming anxiety*. Washington, D.C.: Magination Press.

This workbook-style book is meant for use with both a caregiver and the child who is suffering from anxiety. It is written in a child-friendly, easy to

understand language that encourages children to get involved. It begins with an introduction to parents with instructions and suggestions on how to utilize the book with their children. The child-centered part of the book explains what worry is, why we worry, and then helps guide parents and children in learning strategies to identify, deal with, and overcome worries. There are pages that encourage children to practice strategies, color pictures, and write stories to better understand their anxieties. This book is meant to be used over many weeks in order to really understand and work through the problem-solving techniques, but, if used diligently, offers children many practical strategies to help them overcome anxiety and worry.

After graduating in 1987 with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, Dawn Huebner went on to work as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, first at the Medical College of Ohio, then at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Currently, she is living in New Hampshire with her own private practice specializing in treatment of children with the help of their parents. She has written a series of “what to do” books for children.

Minchella, N. (2003). *Mama will be home soon*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.

This picture book is written for the young reader who has to wait for their loved one to come home again. When Lili’s mama leaves in her bright yellow hat, she promises she will only be gone a few days. Grandma, recognizing how

hard it is for Lili to wait, finds lots of fun things to do to pass the time.

Everywhere she goes, Lili is on the lookout for Mama's yellow hat. Just as she is about to give up looking for Mama, she spots her in her yellow hat. Lili is so excited for Mama to be home! If you are preparing to leave your young child for the first time, this book may help prepare him/her for that time.

Selway, M. (1994). *Don't forget to write*. Nashville, TN: Ideals Children's Books.

This picture book is appropriate for kindergarten and older children who are scared to spend time away from their parents. Written and illustrated by Martina Selway, this book features Rosie, a little girl who nervous to leave mom to spend some time on Grandad and Aunty Mabel's farm. Mom tells her to write to her while she is away. Through Rosie's letters to mom, we learn that she was sad when mom left, but she slowly found lots of fun things to do on the farm. In her last letter to mom, Rosie asks if she can spend more time with Grandad!

Spelman, C.M. (2004). *When I miss you*. Chicago, IL.: Albert Whitman.

When I Miss You is a picture book appropriate for young children. Little Hamster talks about missing Mommy when she leaves for work or dinner. But he finds lots of fun things to do! When Mommy comes home (as she always does), he's so happy!

Cornelia Maude Spelman began her career as a social worker before beginning to write about the importance of emotions in children's lives. *When I Miss You* is a book from her "The Way I Feel" series. "The Way I Feel" series is dedicated to helping young children understand and express their emotions.

Wright, M. (2007). *Jake stays awake*. New York, NY: Square Fish.

This picture book for young children is one in a series of books about Jake, a little boy who works through tough situations in his life with his mom and dad. Michael Wright, a father of three and life-long comic enthusiast, uses humor to help Jake solve tough problems in his life. In *Jake Stays Awake*, Jake finds it difficult to leave his mom and dad at bedtime to sleep in his own bed. Every night before bed, Jake gets nervous and vows to stay awake unless his parents let him sleep in their bed. But their bed is too small. They find themselves trying to sleep in many silly places until Jake decides that maybe his bed is the best place to sleep after all. This funny book helps children realize that although it might be scary, their own bed is the best place to sleep.

Wright, M. (2010). *Jake starts school*. New York, NY: Square Fish.

This rhyming picture book is perfect for children who are nervous about leaving their parents for the first day of school. It is another book in the series written by author and illustrator Michael Wright. Wright's inspiration comes

from watching his own children work through difficult stages in their life, such as the first day of school. In *Jake Starts School*, it's Jake's first day of kindergarten and he doesn't want his parents to leave. There are too many new, scary things in the room! To calm Jake down, his mom and dad agree to spend the day, but the seat is too small, the bike is too small, and the playground wasn't very much fun. At the end of the day, Jake begins to relax and when he finally lets his parents go, realizes how much fun school can be!

BOOKS FOR YOUTH TO READ

Cheng, A. (2010). *Only one year*. New York, NY: Lee and Low Books Inc.

This short chapter book (90 pages) is written for students who are independent readers from second to fifth grade and are facing a major change or separation from a loved one. Mom has decided to go back to work after giving birth to Mary and Sharon's little brother. Instead of putting baby Di Di in daycare, the family decides to send him to live with his grandparents in China. The girls are devastated that their brother has to live so far away. Their grandparents send them letters and pictures and everyone assures them it will only be for a year. As the girls find activities to engage in, they spend less and less time thinking about how much they miss their brother. When the year is up and

Di Di returns, the girls have to get used to having him around again. Quickly, they fall back into their roles as big sisters and find lots of fun things to do with Di Di.

Stemming from her own experience as a young girl whose family lived across the ocean, Andrea Cheng writes many of her books about separation from loved ones. Cheng started her career with a BA in English. She later received her MS in linguistics from Cornell. Currently, she teaches English as a second language and has written close to 20 books.

Canfield, J., Hansen, M.V., Hansen, P., and Dunlap, I. (2005). *Chicken soup for the girl's soul: Real stories by real girls about real stuff*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.

This collection of stories is aimed for an audience of teenage girls. The stories were written and submitted by teenage girls. The editors chose pieces to include in the collection that covered many different areas of teenage development, including anxiety related to school and family matters. The real and inspirational nature of the stories, poems and cartoons offer adolescent age girls a sense of hope and help them feel not quite so alone. Some of the stories that are most pertinent to adolescents dealing with separation anxiety include "The Shy Girl," and "I Learned the Truth at Thirteen."

PARENTAL NOTE: It should be noted that some of the stories in this book contain information about very mature subject matter.

Tompkins, M.A. and Martinez, K.A. (2010). *My anxious mind: A teen's guide to managing anxiety and panic*. Washington, D.C.: Magination Press.

This book is written for children age 12 and older. It is a great resource for teenagers who have excessive anxiety and worries and want practical, easy-to-use strategies to manage their worries. It is written directly to the teen in simple language to help them understand. Each chapter offers real-life situations that help the teenager feel that they are not the only one dealing with these difficult concepts. The book first helps teens figure out how to recognize their anxieties as well as the effects it is having on their daily lives. It also offers suggestions on managing stress and other ways to find help.

Michael Tompkins is a licensed psychologist and assistant professor at the University of California Berkley. He specializes in the treatment of anxiety in children, adolescents, and adults. He is a founding partner of the San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy, as well as a Founding Fellow of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. He has written extensively about the use of cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of anxiety disorders.

Katherine Martinez is a licensed psychologist who specializes in the treatment of children, adolescents, and families presenting with obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, separation anxiety, phobias, selective mutism, panic disorder and agoraphobia, depression, attention-deficit disorders, and tic, elimination, and habit (hair pulling and skin picking) disorders. She also works with parents and caregivers using parent effectiveness training.