

## ***Common Fears in Infancy, Childhood and Adolescence***

### ***Infancy***

***0-6 months: loss of physical support; loud noises (reflexive-startle response)***

***7-12 months: The time when parents first start to typically note fear/anxiety in infants***

***Strangers, separation from parents, heights, looming/unexpected objects***

### ***Toddler Years (13-months to 36-months)***

***Strangers, separation from parents, the dark, animals, injury, toilet, loud noises, masks, clowns/characters***

### ***Preschool Age (4 to 5 years)***

***Separation from parents, the dark, monsters, animals, injury, noises, animals, "bad" people (this also is a peak time for nightmares)***

### ***School Age (6 to 8 years)***

***Separation from parents (especially the younger ages), the dark, injury/sickness, ghosts/witches, thunder and lightning, going to sleep, staying alone (especially at bedtime)***

### ***Preadolescence (9 to 12 years)***

***Tests and grades at school, injury/sickness, personal appearance, social concerns, thunder and lightning, natural disasters, death***

### ***Adolescence***

***Relationships, personal appearance, injury/sickness, tests and grades at school, animals, the future, natural disasters, personal safety, death***

***As the above list shows, fears are incredibly common in child development. While the above list provides a general guide to what emerges at different stages, there is variation between children. Fears alter as children develop cognitively and through their own experiences. While most fears will eventually subside as the child continues to develop, it is important to note that even these common fears can become problematic if they start to interfere with everyday functioning. So, it is not the presence of one of these fears that is concerning, but the extent to which it affects the child.***

### ***Sources:***

***Mash, E.J. & Wolfe, D.A. (2013). *Abnormal Child Psychology (5th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.***

***Snow, C.W. & McGaha, C.G. (2003). *Infant Development (3rd Edition)*. Upper Saddle River: NJ.***