



Uh OH! Clown @ 12 O'clock.

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What should you do if your child is already afraid of a costumed character and you can't avoid them?

- 1) Step back but don't run away.
- 2) Stop right where you are and don't move.
- 3) Put yourself between the child and the character or hold your child.
- 4) Let your child stand on their own, crouch down and hold their hand or hug them.
- 5) Talk to your child about what it is they see or are afraid of. Illicit yes or no answers if your child is not very verbal.
- 6) Answer any questions your child may have honestly, "Yes he is just dressed up, that is a mask or make-up like you would wear on Halloween."
- 7) Prepare them in advance. Read books watch videos about clowns, or dinosaurs, or mice, or Santa.
- 8) Don't build up to much excitement or anticipation of meeting these types of characters if you know they will be present.
- 9) Your reaction to your child's fear will dictate how they react in the future. Take their fears seriously, but don't mimic their fear or anxiety. Shooing children out of the room, or hiding their face before they get a chance to see the character tells them that you also think costumed characters are scary and will reinforce their fear and anxiety.
- 10) Avoid exposing your children to movies, games, stories or videos that paint costumed characters evil, scary or nasty light.

