

Tips to Ease Separation Anxiety

Saying goodbye can be difficult for both parents and children. It is normal to have many different feelings on the first few days of school. You and your child may feel anxious, sad, excited or a combination of emotions! Here are a few tips to help you and your child on the first days of pre-K or 3-K:

- **Bring something special from home**

Your child's teacher may encourage you to bring along a comfort item from home. A stuffed animal, favorite doll, a special blanket, or even a family picture may help your child feel connected to home and family while at school.

- **A note from home**

Write a short note to your child, saying, "Have a great day. I will be back to pick you up at 3:00. I love you." Let the teacher know that the note is in your child's book bag so that she may read it to him when he misses you.

- **Stay a while**

If you see that your child is distressed about you leaving, stay a while. Talk to your child about what she will be doing at school: show her around the classroom, reintroduce her to the teacher and help her find her favorite toys.

- **Make sure to say good-bye**

Let your child know who will be there to pick her up at the end of the day. Instead of sneaking out of the classroom, hug, kiss, wave or say "See you later!" once she's become engaged in an activity. Saying goodbye helps your child feel confident you will return when you say you will. You can affirm a nervous child's feelings by telling her that you will miss her, too.

- **Develop consistent daily routines**

Routines are important for helping a young child feel safe in a new place. Using the same hello and goodbye routine each day is one way to help your child get used to separating each day. When children know what will happen next in their day they are less likely to feel anxious.

- **Make time for play**

Playing with other kids helps your child practice sharing and taking turns. Playing can happen at structured playdates, at the park or at family gatherings.

- **Read together every day!**

Read books with your child about separation to help her understand that you may go away, but you will come back. Below are just a few suggestions to choose from. Visit your local library or ask your child's teacher for more book suggestions.

You Go Away by Dorothy Corey

You Are Special Little One by Nancy Tafuri

Llama Llama Misses Mama by Anna Dewdney

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

