



Overcoming Separation Anxiety

Entering a new environment and leaving mommy/daddy for the first time can cause anxiety for children- and their parents.

WHAT TO DO:

1. **Say goodbye-** Give your child a hug and a kiss, tell them you will be back soon and then walk out the door.
2. **Trust your child's teacher-** Preschool teachers know kids and they have many ways to calm your little one down.
3. **Establish a goodbye routine-** Preschoolers crave routine. Come up with a couple of things that you do to say goodbye.
4. **Confront the problem head on-** The best way to cope with anxiety is to just deal with it. The reality is, that within minutes of their parent's exit, most kids happily settle down and forget what all the fuss was about.
5. **Try a change-** It's a reality of parenthood that kids often behave better for people other than their parents. If there's a relative, friend or neighbor who is game, let them handle dropping off for a few days and see if there is a change in the child's behavior.
6. **Enlist the help of home-** The most important message to send to your child is that you love them. Together pick out something that reminds them of home- a small stuffed animal, a photo, even a smiley face drawn on their hand. It just needs to be something that provides comfort.
7. **Give your child something to look forward to-** Get to know the other parents and children, if possible put some friendly faces in the crowd by scheduling play dates with some of your child's classmates. If your child sees someone they recognize, they are more likely to relax.

DON'T BE LATE FOR PICK-UP! If you are late your child gets very anxious.

BE PREPARED FOR REGRESSION! Just when you think you have preschool anxiety separation under control, along comes school vacation or an illness that keeps you child home for a few days and..... It's back again! This is perfectly normal. While upsetting- it may last just a day or two.