

F A L L 2 0 1 6

Separation Anxiety

Parent's guide to managing anxiety at the start of the school year

Trust your child's teacher: Teachers and school staff are highly trained to handle separation anxiety in students. Trust us, they are in good hands. If you have any questions or concerns maintaining contact with the classroom teacher is the best way to stay in the know regarding your child's progress.

Establish a routine: Many children respond positively to a structured schedule that leaves no room for guessing or mystery. Fear of the unknown can provoke anxiety when a child's routine is dynamic and events are unexpected or not what they are used to.

Arrange play dates with other children in the class: Children are often anxious when they are in an unfamiliar environment with unfamiliar people. When anxious kids become more familiarized with peers outside of the classroom it helps them to develop positive peer relationships that will translate to the classroom setting.

Let them know they are in your thoughts: Simple gestures like a note in a lunch box or pencil case reassuring the child that you love and care for them can help them feel at ease at school.

Acknowledge the source of the anxiety: If your child experienced trouble with academics or problems with other students in the previous year they may now have reservations returning for the new school year. It is important to have discussions regarding the negative experience and create a plan for how to cope with this problem if it arises again.

Stay calm: If your child is having a rough time transitioning to school, your emotional reaction can exacerbate the anxiety they are feeling. Stay calm and don't let them see you sweat. Stay as cool as a cucumber and be positive. Reassure your child upon drop off that you love them and that they will be in your thoughts throughout the day.

Don't linger: As hard as it is to see your little one teary eyed and distressed it is important not to linger or walk your child to the classroom. Make drop off brief and begin your departure as soon as you are sure your child is safely under the supervision of school staff.



Anxiety is normal...

It is important to reassure your child that it is normal to feel anxious when away from Mom and Dad. Have a discussion about what anxiety feels like.

There are some resources that can help you and your child.

Deep breathing

www.pbs.org/parents/adventures-inlearning/2015/09/calming-for-kids

Other Helpful Resources

www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety-in-children.htm

www.parenting.com/gallery/how-to-deal-with-school-separation-anxiety