



Helping You Child Cope With Separation Anxiety

By Marcia J

Dropping your child off at preschool when he is crying can be traumatic for both parent and child. Knowing that most children experience separation anxiety at one time or another, and it is a natural part of development, doesn't make it easier. There are things that parents and caregivers can do to lessen the apprehension and help children cope.

1. Preparation is key. Knowing what to expect can ease a lot of anxiety even before arriving at preschool. Talk with your child about the routines and events at the school. Let him know that you will be leaving and when you will be back.
 2. Bring your child in for a visit. Introduce him to the teachers, and help him form a bond with them. Let him explore the environment a little. Play with him and get to know the classroom a little yourself. After the visit, talk with your child about what he liked in the classroom, some of the children he met and toys he played with.
 3. Be confident. When you bring your child to school on the first day, you may be experiencing a little of your own anxiety. This can increase your child's tension, so do your best not to let it show. Keep a positive attitude and try to get your preschooler excited about his new adventure.
 4. Develop a routine. Tell him what will happen when you arrive at school, when you will leave, and keep it consistent. Once you tell him you are leaving, say goodbye and go quickly. It may be hard to leave him if he is crying, but staying longer will make it worse.
 5. Let him bring a security object. Having something familiar with him or pictures of his family will help to comfort him when he misses you.
 6. Get to know some of the other parents and children in your child's class. Arrange a play date with one or two of the other children to help your child form friendships. Knowing some of the children will help him feel more comfortable at school.
 7. Be patient. It can be difficult to see your child upset. Keep in mind that this is difficult for him and allow him some time to adjust. Sometimes it takes children a week or two to feel comfortable in a new environment.
-