

TIPS FOR SEPARATION ANXIETY

Preparing for the 1st day of school and beyond

Separation anxiety is a challenging but common occurrence in young children. Here are some strategies to help you and your child as they transition to school.

1. **Be Patient and Reassuring:** Understand that separation anxiety is a natural part of growing up. Be patient with your child's emotions and provide reassurance that you will always come back together. Let your child express their emotions and validate their feelings. Acknowledge that feeling sad or nervous is okay and that you understand.
2. **Create a Predictable Routine:** Children feel more secure when they know what to expect. Establish a consistent daily routine for getting ready for school and for drop-off and pick-up.
3. **Avoid Lengthy Farewells:** Prolonged goodbyes can make the separation more difficult for both you and your child. Once you say goodbye, leave promptly and confidently. This reinforces the idea that your child is safe at school and you feel confident that they will be okay. Lingering reinforces their fear of separating from you.
4. **Say Goodbye:** Always say goodbye to your child when leaving, even if they are upset. Sneaking away may lead to increased anxiety and distrust. Keep your goodbyes brief and positive.
5. **Stay Calm:** Children can pick up on their parents'/guardians' emotions. Stay calm and confident during drop-offs to help your child feel more at ease. Rest assured that 99% of the time your child is fine once they get in the school and start their routine.

Remember that separation anxiety is often temporary, and most children adjust to the school environment quickly. By keeping yourself calm and providing support, understanding, and patience, you can help your child navigate this new stage more smoothly. Please feel free to contact your child's counselor with any questions or concerns.