

# SEPARATION ANXIETY

## *tips and tricks from your teacher*

It's 100% normal for both students and grown-ups to have some anxiety about parting ways at the school. Here are some tips and tricks to help!



### ✓ **PRACTICE**

- Start with small separations and gradually increase the length of time apart.
- Practice the morning routine for a week or two before it happens. Set an alarm for when you'd start getting ready for school and do all the things necessary up to getting into the car (and maybe even driving there and waving at the school).

### ✓ **PLAN**

- Drive past the school and point it out at every opportunity.
- Choose a special outfit for school - maybe a t shirt with a favorite character, some snazzy light up shoes, or a cool jacket.
- Look at pictures of the school and, if possible, go in to meet the teacher.

### ✓ **BE POSITIVE**

- You may have to "fake it 'til you make it" as you keep your own emotions in check.
- Don't let your child hear you say, "He's going to cry all day" or, "I know she's really nervous." Be positive!

### ✓ **PROCEDURE**

- Make sure to say goodbye when you leave. Trying to "sneak out" when the child is busy and not looking sometimes makes your child panic a few minutes later and may make the separation even more difficult the next day.
- A special (short) routine can help with the transition. Some examples are a kiss on the head and on both cheeks, a special handshake and hug, or a special phrase like "I love you to the moon and back!" helps signal to your child that it's time for you to go.
- Whatever you do, do **not** turn around and go back into the classroom to check on your child! The school will let you know if they need your help.

### ✓ **PICTURES, POCKET NOTES, AND PALS**

- A picture of your family can be incredibly soothing for a child. If possible, laminate it or somehow protect it as it will be well loved.
- A short note that your child can keep in their pocket can be a magic balm for nerves. Tell them what you are writing (keep it short, only one sentence or phrase!) and they can touch the note every time they feel they miss you.
- A photo, a lovey, or comfort item can help a child make the transition. Ask the school what the policy is on such items.