

5 Steps

To Reduce Separation Anxiety in Children Going to School



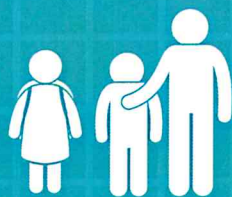
Starting school is a big step for both child and parent. Your child may experience feelings of separation anxiety at this time because they are just starting school and it is new to them to be apart from a parent. This type of separation anxiety is quite normal and is part of growing up. These 5 simple steps can help reduce separation anxiety for both you and your child.

1

Don't Plant Seeds

Talk positively about school and your own experiences when you were little and try not to focus on your own worries about them being in school. It is common for parents to pass on their own anxieties and worries to their children, but try to recognise when you are doing this and it will help.

2



Introduce them to other children who will be starting school at the same time

If your child is starting school for the first time, arrange play dates with other parents who have children starting at the same school. The children can get to know each other and so your child will have someone they know to talk to and play with on the first day at their new school.

3

De-stress the Morning Routine

A good morning routine can help get the day off to a smooth start so that the journey to school can be used as time to talk positively about the day ahead; your child will start the day calmer, prepared and more relaxed about going in. For example, set an alarm clock so everyone wakes up on time, make packed lunches the night before etc.



4

Take something in from home; a transitional object or toy

Sometimes children can get anxious about leaving their home where they feel secure and have all their toys and books around them. If they are feeling particularly anxious sometimes this can mean tantrums, screaming etc. which can be traumatic for parents. Allowing your child to take in a teddy or a favourite toy from home can sometimes help them feel connected to home and their family. Make sure the school will let them bring their toy with them.

5

Keep goodbye short and sweet

A long drawn-out goodbye can cause anxiety and also gives your child an opportunity to cling to you and increase your own anxiety. When you do say goodbye (and don't be tempted to just sneak off as this could make them less trustful of you) just give them a quick cuddle, say you will see them later and to have a nice day and leave straight away.



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