

The Parents' Corner

★We're In your Corner★



This month in honor of Back to School, we tackle 'Separation Anxiety':

We've either seen it or experienced it ourselves to some degree—your child is crying—you're trying to leave—you feel the guilt. You may start to ask yourself: Is this normal? Should I stick around? Should I offer them something so that they don't continue to cry? Is it bad if I cry too? Should I check in during the school day to let them know it will be ok? Will they be ok? If you've asked yourself these questions, you are not alone!

Let's begin with the fact that separation anxiety IS normal. It is not only common, but also developmentally appropriate for young children to experience difficulty with separating from their caregivers. Here's the catch—within a few weeks, as they have more exposure to their new environment, it should subside. If it doesn't and continues to interfere with your child's learning, looking into some support for your student may be the next step!

Now let's confront those questions! Although you have the best intentions, sticking around could lead to more issues. A quick good-bye is usually the best remedy—something like, "I love you, and I'll see you after school". Show your child that you have complete confidence that they will be ok without you. That being said, it *is* still acceptable to validate their feelings—"I can see that you are upset/worried/scared/sad."—and listen to their concerns. Reassurance *can* help in the morning, but checking in throughout the day only reinforces the idea that they need you and can't handle it themselves. Most times, we find that once the parent is out of sight, the child is able to acclimate to their new setting and participate with their peers and classroom expectations without a problem.

You can do this 😊— You may feel awful (and that is also NORMAL), but you are giving them a chance to navigate their emotions and in turn develop independence and a boost in confidence. Put that 'Quick Good-bye' into action, don't linger, and resist the power struggle! Stay calm and consistent—"I love you, and I'll see you after school".

If you continue to have concerns, contact your school counselor to make a plan for a successful transition—they're full of ideas, and are always in your corner!~

Looking for some ways to alleviate the home struggles?

- *Make a key ring for their backpack with a family photo that you choose together
- *Listen to Daniel Tiger's 'Grown Ups Come Back' song (found on YouTube)
- *Read "The Kissing Hand" (along with Chester's song) by Audrey Penn
- *Read "Llama, Llama Misses Mama" by Anne Dewdney
- *Make up a secret handshake or a fun rhyme for your good-byes