

How to say Goodbye....

Tips for loving, successful morning departures



It gets easier each time you are consistent

- **Allow your child to walk into school and the classroom on their own two feet.** Carrying a child sends the message that you want to keep them safe, close and protected. However, carrying an already anxious child into the classroom may send the message that there is something unsafe that they need to be protected from. It will likely make them more anxious and upset when they have to part from you. A child who walks into his or her school or classroom on their own feet is being encouraged to manage his feelings appropriately and independently on their own initiative. Take a deep breath, hold their hand lovingly and tightly, and enter, say goodbye and leave the classroom confidently. Your child will be ok, and it's ok to not be ok for a little while – especially when we're learning to self-regulate without out you for a little while – an essential skill for their school years.
- **Be loving, but firm – your child will be ok.** It's important to comfort your child and be honest. Children often feel best when they know they've been heard. If your child is upset acknowledge their feelings to help them understand and express them better; *"I know it's hard to say goodbye when I am gone. It makes you sad or frustrated. It's not easy. But you can do this. I will see you later today."* Your child will be most successful if you send the message, *"school is a safe place for you to be,"* and you take the lead to create a happy, loving goodbye routine. It's ok to walk away from your child if they're still upset after being offered comfort. Your child's teachers will make certain they encourage and guide your child into an activity or offer them comfort during transition. Most children accept their parents' departure a few minutes after they leave even if they become very upset during. Never 'trick' your child by disappearing when they aren't looking, and never bribe or threaten your children at drop-off (i.e. "Ok, then no ice cream later if you act like this!" or "I'll get you a toy if you're good at drop-off all week.") Bribes and threats are meaningless and in fact, detrimental to children who deserve guidance rather than quick fixes.
- **Be a model for your child if you must.** If you have the time, take the lead and get involved in something in the classroom, especially an area that other children are interested in. It will help develop connections for your child with their peers and it will model that the classroom is a safe place to be.
- **Stick to it.** Giving a loving, warm goodbye to your child is important. Sometimes, it's best to say goodbye and go. You can signal your child's teacher before this happens. We are prepared to help your child if you are ready to leave and they are ready to melt down. Melt downs are your child's way of saying, *"I haven't yet learned how to manage this big set of feelings I feel when you leave."* When you set your time to leave their classroom – be firm, and stick to the time even if you must walk away from your crying child. Each time you reinforce that you love them, but you must leave for work or responsibilities, you're showing your child that you're bigger, stronger, wiser and kinder. Every child needs a stronger, wiser, bigger, kinder adult to feel safe and supported to explore and take chances. Stick to your commitment. It gets easier each time you are consistent.

First Day Jitters

The first days can be an anxious time for some children (and some moms and dads, too!). They walk in a new room with all of these new kids, and new grownups, and new "stuff" and maybe Mom looks a little teary-eyed that her "baby" is growing up so fast...well; it's no wonder some kids might suddenly cling to their parents and cry! Here are some tips for getting through the first few days:

Try to act confident yourself. If you seem anxious and unsure about leaving your child, your child will pick up on that and start wondering if there really is something to worry about!

Be consistent with good-byes. We will greet your child and you can give kisses and say good-bye. We promise to embrace your child and help ease him/her into the classroom!

Make sure to say good-bye when you leave. Trying to "sneak out" when the child is busy and not looking sometimes makes the kids panic a few minutes later, and may make separation even more difficult the next day.

Separation problems sometimes show up on the second or third day, just when you thought you were getting off easy! It is also common for children to have difficulties when there are major changes in the home. Let us know if there is anything happening at your house that you think is important for us to be aware of.

Some of us are parents ourselves and really do understand how hard this can be. We know that you are entrusting us with a very precious gift, and we feel honored that we will be your child's teachers.

If your child is having an especially hard time, we will give you a call on your cell or home phone (make sure we have these numbers!).

We are looking forward to a great year!