

## Ways to Conquer Separation Anxiety

**Make Sure They Know What to Expect** - Prepare your child for what will happen so that there are no surprises. Read books about school. Visit the playground. Talk to your child about what it will be like. Let him know that you won't be staying with him and how the drop off process goes.

**Read Children's Books** - The Kissing Hand is a classic book and can be wonderful for young kids going to school for the first time. The Invisible String is also wonderful. It is a great way to teach being connected even when we are separated.

**Sing A Goodbye Song or Have a Goodbye Saying** - Another way to deal with separation anxiety is to have a special goodbye song or saying, after which the child knows they have to go. I like, "Goodbye for Now, Hello Again Later!" Or, try "The Kissing Hand" yourself - kiss the palm of your child's hand, and they will know your love is close by! They can kiss yours too in case you start to miss them!

**Wear a Special Bracelet or Carry A Special Token** - One thing that might help is if your child wears a bracelet from her parents to remind her that they are thinking about her. Some kids like to carry a token in their pocket, or a handkerchief sprayed with mom's perfume. They may also like to carry a small picture. For some children, this is comforting.

**Plan "3 Special Steps"** - On the show "Special Agent Oso", a James Bond type friendly bear uses "three special steps" to solve problems and do basic tasks, such as getting dressed or making a salad. The three special steps are

something you can do and adapt it for just about any situation causes anxiety. Talk about the situation before it happens, and then give small steps to focus on while it is happening. Step one: get in the car and drive to school. Step two: Walk into the building to wait with your teacher and class. Step three: Say “hello” to your teacher and start your day. Another great resource is to visit this website and see how Daniel Tiger adjusts to going to school - <https://pbskids.org/learn/lifes-little-lessons/separation/>

**Check Your Emotions** - Parents should try to be as positive as possible at drop off too. Kids definitely sense parents’ anxiety and sadness, and this can make the transition into the classroom even more difficult for the child. Take that “First Day of School Picture” at home before you get in the car and don’t make the walk into the building part of your photo documentation.

**Let Them Walk In** - Act confident and joyful for your child! If you are hesitant of letting go, your child WILL pick up on that. Make sure they walk into the school; when they are carried, it might send the message that you are hesitant.

**Don’t Linger** - Before saying goodbye at the bus or car, give a quick kiss or hug, maybe a silly song or funny handshake to say goodbye but don’t linger. And if your child is crying, please know that 99% of the time, kids are feeling better and actively engaged in the classroom within moments.

If your child is struggling with the transition into school for more than just a few days, your child’s teacher and classroom staff will work with you to help with more specific ways to ease your child’s transition into the classroom.