

Dealing with Separation Anxiety

Below are some suggestions on how to deal with separation anxiety for young children and you, as parents.

- **Make your exit short.** Drawing out goodbyes with extra kisses, questions and instructions can make the situation worse. Let your little one know you will be back and that you love them. Please keep it short and sweet!
- **Explain the time of your return in child terms.** Toddlers and small children cannot tell the time so make your return more relevant by saying you will be back around lunchtime or nap time. This will give the child an idea of the time-frame.
- **Plan an activity.** This could be a special book, playing with a favourite toy or planting in the garden. Redirect your child to the activity as you leave and say goodbye, remind them how much fun it will be.
- **Do not sneak out.** This can cause a child not to trust their carer and cause insecurities and fears. Always say goodbye.
- **Assign a task.** As you leave, ask your child to open the door for you, and then close it or wave from the window. Your child could draw a picture, which you could both finish and colour later.
- **Have a short 'signature' goodbye.** This could be two kisses, a high five or a bear hug. This 'new' tradition will give your child security and something to look forward to when they say goodbye.
- **Make the reunion special.** Upon return, give lots of attention and affection. Do not test them or bombard them with questions; try not to check your phone for messages or emails. Devote time to them. Show your child how much you have missed them and make them feel loved.

Remember, if you need support or advice with this – we are here to help – please email the 'help' email account that is noted in the Transition Brochure.