

Family Activities



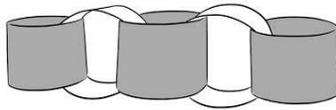
School Readiness Skill: Separates easily from parents and family

Starting school can be quite challenging for children that struggle with separating from their parents. Try some of the tips and activities below to help ease what is known as “separation anxiety.”

Play Dates



Your child will need many opportunities to be away from you even if it is for a short period of time before they make the transition to school. Make arrangements for your child to spend time away from you, such as at a grandparent’s house. You can also set up a time to have a play date at friend’s house. At first you may only want them to stay over for a couple of hours but then you may begin to adjust it to an entire afternoon or day. This will help build confidence in your child that being away from mom or dad is OK.



Countdown Chain

Use a count-down chain that counts down the days until school starts. It will help serve as a visual reminder that school will be starting soon. Help your child color and cut strips of paper into 1” by 5” strips. Create loops by affixing the ends of the strips together using tape or glue. Make one loop for each of days you will be counting down. For example, if there are 10 days until school starts you will need 10 loops. Hang the chain in a special place and help your child tear off one link each day until the special day is reached. Be sure to talk with your child about the countdown by making comments such as “Look, you only have 3 more days until school starts.” You can make additional countdown chains for other times your child will be separating from you (i.e. weekend with grandma or a sleepover at a friend’s house).

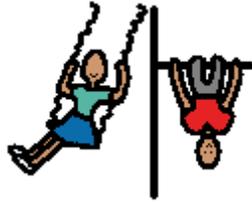
Let’s Pretend

Talk with your child about what to expect when they start school. Encourage him or her to practice the routine with you by pretend play (i.e. waking up, getting dressed, eating breakfast, driving to school and so on). This can help build confidence in your child when it is really time for school to start.

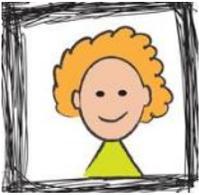


Visit School

Take your child for a visit to school before the first day. If you are planning to drop off and pick up your child, practice this procedure. Introduce your child to the teacher. Walk around the school. Find the cafeteria, office, classroom, gym, playground, etc. Try to arrange a tour of the school building or check if there will be an orientation.



Keepsake



Many children that struggle with separating from their family members do well by keeping a keepsake that reminds them of their loved one or home. Try sending a photograph or other item that is special to them that they can keep in their locker or backpack at school. Having this item close by them at school can help comfort them.

Separation Books

There are many children's books available that help children deal with separation. Check your local public library for many of these great titles.



The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn
Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes
Mama Always Comes Home by Karma Wilson
Llama Llama Misses Mama by Anna Dewdney
I'm Not Ready! by Jonatan Allen
Don't Forget to Come Back! by Robbie H. Harris
Jake Starts School by Michael Wright