



## Separation Hints and Positive Transition Suggestions for Young Children

- Establish good bedtime and morning routines at home.
- Prepare **yourself** first so that you are able to handle your child's feelings.
- Convey a positive attitude toward school.
- Begin to set up playdates with other children as soon as possible. Introduce yourself to other families at school.
- Be consistent about following a simple separation plan (such as a kiss and one hug), and practice this routine at home too. Say a short goodbye!
- Read books to your child about beginning school. Suggestions include:
  - *The Kissing Hand* by A. Penn
  - *Will You Come Back For Me?* by A. Tompert
  - *Will I Have a Friend?* by M. Cohen
- Greet teachers in a friendly and warm manner. Children can sense an adult's uncertainty. Spend the first few days focusing on greeting teachers and building relationships. There will be plenty of time to ask questions later and lots of information will be distributed the first few days of school.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. ("I know it is hard when we have to say goodbye. We both feel sad.") Stress what you will be doing when you are together again. ("When you get home after school we are going to play a board game together.")
- At this age it is normal for children to be sad leaving you. Some show it by crying and clinging. The best way to help your child separate is to be firm and friendly, sticking to your separation routine. Never sneak out.
- For some children, they will separate easily. Don't worry, it is also normal for some children to be excited about new experiences. They love you as much as the child who cries! Allow them the opportunity to freely join their class.
- Some children benefit from a small transitional object (not a toy) or picture that fits in their pocket. It can serve as a reminder of home. Alert the teacher if you've sent something other than a picture.
- Do not ask your child's permission to leave, or return to class if your child is crying. This could send the message that there actually is something to fear. When fearful or worried, children often look to adults to gauge how safe they are in new surroundings.
- Be confident in your child and in your ability to separate. Being school aged is something to celebrate. After a few weeks, you will be relieved to know that they are happy and thriving at school!