





## HELPFUL PARENTING TIPS

### CHILD SEPARATION ANXIETY

The first day of preschool can be met with a mix of excitement and anxiety for children and parents alike. Although it is fun to embark on a new adventure and many preschoolers delight in the feeling of being “big”, change can be scary for little ones and even their parents!

It is only natural for children to feel anxious when saying goodbye to their parents. In fact, separation anxiety is a normal part of child development. It can begin before the first birthday and pop up again up until age four or even occur into elementary school.

As you prepare to drop your child off at preschool, try these strategies to help your child cope with separation anxiety by creating a goodbye strategy:

#### AT HOME

- ~ implement healthy sleep habits
- ~ provide an energy-boosting breakfast

#### ON THE WAY TO PRESCHOOL

- ~ discuss what your child might do at preschool, who he/she will see, and how much fun he/she will have
- ~ if you sense this discussion is stressful, switch the topic to small talk

#### AT PRESCHOOL

- ~ do not linger at the door at preschool
- ~ give your child a hug, kiss, or “high 5” and say a quick goodbye cheerfully and matter-of-factly. Then walk away without a backward glance. (this is tough, but necessary)

#### AFTER YOU LEAVE PRESCHOOL

- ~ if needed, check in with your child’s teacher or director during classtime. Most children who cry at drop off, turn off the tears right after the preschool goodbye.

## CREATIVE CORNER

### FAMILY PLAYTIME

Has the grown-up world left you too tired to play? Consider these ideas that will let you connect with your youngster and unwind after a long day!

- Show your child what you liked to play when you were his/her age. You could teach your child a card game, a jump rope rhyme, or a magic tricks, for instance. Next ask your child to teach you a game or an activity.
- Step into a role. You might each pretend to be someone else (a cashier, a customer, a bird, or a squirrel, as some examples) while carrying on a conversation. Encourage your youngster to think about how the character would sound and what your child would say.
- At bedtime, shine a flashlight on the walls, ceiling, and floor. Have your child “chase” your beam with his/her own flashlight. Then trade rolls.

HAVE FUN!!!