

TIPS FOR HELPING KIDS WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY

Symptoms of Separation Anxiety

- Feeling upset when it's time to separate from a caregiver
- Refusal to participate in activities without a caregiver
- Physical symptoms like stomachaches and trouble sleeping in the time leading up to a separation from a caregiver
- Worry that harm will come to the caregiver when they are gone

What To Say

- "It's okay that you're worried."
- "I will be back when..."
- "While I'm gone, ___ will take care of you."
- "While I'm gone, you will get to____."
- "I love you."

Things To Avoid

- Avoid shaming your child for their separation anxiety. Try not to say things like "stop being a baby" or "big kids don't cry."
- If possible, stick with your decision to go. Canceling your plans so you can stay with your child may make their separation anxiety worse.
- Don't be dishonest about how long you'll be gone.

What To Do

- Keep your goodbyes short and sweet.
- Practice separating for small amounts of time, and then build up from there.
- If your child is going somewhere, allow them to take a small object or photo that feels familiar.
- Create a consistent drop-off routine so they know what to expect.

Other Tips To Try

- Get on the same page as the person who will be caring for your child. Work together to create a plan for your child.
- Try to manage your emotions and stay calm. If your child senses that you are feeling upset or worried, they may have a harder time calming down.
- If the separation anxiety continues or gets in the way of their ability to do the things they enjoy, consider getting help from a professional.

