


Helping Your Child Transition Away from You



1. Prepare Ahead of Time

- **Talk About It Early:** Briefly explain where they're going and what they'll do there. Use pictures, social stories, or videos if possible.
- **Practice in Small Steps:** Short separations at home (e.g., you step out for 2 minutes) to build comfort.
- **Pack Comfort Items:** Let them take a small, familiar object to the new setting.
- **Preview the Schedule:** Show them the order of the day ("First school, then home for snack.").

3. Reinforce & Reconnect After

- **Praise Effort:** "You did a great job saying goodbye today!"
- **Special Moment Together:** A few minutes of one-on-one attention after pick-up.
- **Highlight Successes:** Talk about one good thing from the time apart.

5. Parent Mindset:

- Notice your own discomfort and thoughts ("I feel guilty leaving" / "What if he cries?").
- Acknowledge them without letting them decide your actions.
- Stay anchored in your values, helping your child gain independence and trust in other caregivers.

2. During Drop-Off or Separation

- **Stay Calm and Predictable:** Your tone and body language signal safety.
- **Use a Consistent Goodbye Routine:** Example: hug → "See you after school!" → wave → walk away.
- **Avoid Long Goodbyes:** Prolonging separation can increase distress.
- **Pass to the Next Person:** Greet the teacher together, then hand off.
- **Visual Anchor:** If possible, have a visual cue for reunion (e.g., "I'll be here in the car rider line after school.").

4. If Your Child Resists or Protests

- **Acknowledge Feelings:** "You really want to stay with me. That's hard."
- **Stay Confident:** Don't change the plan if it's a safe, necessary transition, changing in the moment can strengthen avoidance.
- **Keep the Routine:** Stick to the same goodbye steps each time.
- **Model Calm:** Breathe slowly, steady your voice, and keep movements gentle.
- **Short Step Approach (if needed):** Start with walking them halfway, then gradually reduce your role over time. skills for the future.



Your child learns from your consistency. Each successful transition, even if it includes tears, it's building their coping skills for the future.