Planning for Arrival

Suggestions to help you and your child (ren) begin the day in a calm and relaxed way.

- Prepare any food/drink you or your child needs before school the evening before and have your child help. All food needs to be eaten before entering the center/classroom.
- Lay out your child’s diapers, clothes or extra clothes, your books, homework, items for work, etc. before going to bed.
- Sit down and develop a routine of what you and your child will do first, next and last at home. Then follow it consistently until the pattern of behavior is set.
- Time yourself from the parking lot into the classroom (walking at your child’s pace), giving yourself time to sign your child in, get them settled including putting their items away, and back to your car or to your first class. Use this exercise to make sure to give yourself enough time each morning so that you are not rushed.
- When you arrive at the classroom make contact with your child’s teacher and sit down a few minutes to help your child transition and get started.
- If your child needs the support of a teacher when you leave, find a teacher and have them ready before you say good-bye. Say good-bye to your child calmly.
- Walk out of the classroom and have a terrific day!!!

Planning for Pick Up/Departure

When you return to pick up your child you again need a planned routine to help of you through the transition of leaving.

- As you enter your child’s room or the front office, locate your child’s sign in/out sheet and sign your child out; taking any notes attached to the sheet.
- If you have any business to take care of with the center’s office do it before you pick up your child. Business gets done most efficiently without a child romping about the office space.
- Enter the classroom and gather your child’s belongings and their work created that day from their cubbie. If you are missing clothes, please check the classroom’s Lost and Found.
- Locate your child and be prepared to greet them warmly, chat with them about what they are doing, and perhaps even wait a few minutes until they complete their activity before you leave.
- When you (not your child) decide it is time to leave, say good-bye to a staff member and walk out of the classroom.
- On the way to the care or home, you could share that you were thinking of your child while you were gone and wondered if they had…ridden bikes, sung songs, read stories, played in sand, etc today. This gives your child an opening to share what is important to them about the day. And lets them know you were thinking of them while you were apart.
- And…have a great evening!
Separation

Separation anxiety is normal for your child and yourself. A new class, a new job or a new school set all our stomachs fluttering.

During the uncertainty and confusion of first days of school your child may cling, cry and not want to leave. To help everyone get settled and feel comfortable, here are some suggestions.

- Take your child to their teacher; she will direct you to an adult who will help your child if they are unable to cope themselves. That person will stay with your child until s/he feels comfortable.

- If your child feels uncomfortable in the environment, feel free to come in early and stay with them for a while, or return early and spend time with them in the classroom at the end of the day.

- Tell your child what time you will be leaving and LEAVE at that time. Leaving does hurt so do it quickly. It will be come harder not easier if you prolong your leaving. Do not let your child manipulate you into staying longer by crying.

- Tell you child when you are leaving and returning. If a child does not know what their parent has left, but discover it later, trust is broken and uncertainty is increased. Be sure to return when you promised, the staff will be reminding your child when you will be back.

- Your child will not be left alone to cry. The staff are highly trained and well-qualified to help your child come to grips with his/her separation anxieties. If you are concerned the first few days, feel free to either call the classroom or drop by. The teacher will be monitoring your child’s separation behavior and if she feels you need to stay longer, more often or return sooner, she will work out a plan with you. Be sure to share your concerns and questions with the teacher. Most children work through the leaving process within a month.

Remember coping and working through beginnings is a growing experience which serves your child well for a lifetime. We want children to learn to deal with new experiences effectively and they do!!!
How to Say Good-Bye

Saying good-bye as you leave your child with a new caregiver or school may tug at your heart strings, but you can put the 'good' back in good-bye and ease difficult transitions:

Prepare yourself

- Talk to other parents who have dealt successfully with similar transitions

Prepare your child

- Play peek-a-boo with infants to help them begin to learn separation
- Use occasional substitute care before the big day
- Take toddlers or older kids to the new place ahead of time. Show them bathrooms, cubbies, play areas and let them meet the teacher.
- As the big day approaches, stick to familiar, comforting routines such as bed time stories. Establish new routines for the transition; let your child help pick out clothes or pack their extra clothes.
- Let your child take a favorite toy or comforting blanket and a picture of the families with him.
- On the way there, discuss what you’ll do together at the end of the day.
- Never, ever leave without saying good-bye directly to your child and assuring her that you’ll be back.

The Reunion

- Bring a snack for your child to have on the way home.
- Don’t be surprised at your child’s reaction. Some children, even infants, may ignore parents or refuse to leave instead of greeting them joyfully. Departing routines, packing up belongings or putting away play things, help.
- Allow children their own time and ways to adjust.
- Make a decision to put all else out of your mind and spend time with your child when you are reunited. After being apart all day, you need each other