

Dealing with Separation Anxiety in Toddlers **Learn How to Ease Toddler Stress on Starting Daycare or Preschool**

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Leaving a sobbing toddler is never easy. Use these simple and gentle ways to effectively ease separation anxiety and instill independence in toddlers.

Separation anxiety in toddlers is seen mostly either when they start preschool or when a previously stay-at-home parent decides to go back to work, leaving them at daycare. The stress of being left alone in the midst of strangers can manifest in crying, clinging and generally, difficult behavior, even in usually cheerful and easygoing toddlers.

Since it is important to deal with this fear of being away from parents and encourage young children to be more independent and comfortable in new surroundings, it is essential that the methods used to ease separation anxiety should be gentle, simple as well as effective. Here are some ways that could help you to do just that.

Prepare Your Toddler

The best thing to do when dealing with a situation that could lead to separation anxiety would be to gently prepare your toddler. Explain why going to daycare or preschool is needed. Get together other toddlers who would be starting preschool or daycare and let them spend time together.

Shop together for clothes or little accessories for first day at preschool or daycare; or the night before, have your toddler help to pick a special outfit to wear the next day, pack a special lunch and take out photos. In other words, prepare your toddler to absorb the new phase and be ready to step into a new environment, independently.

Focus on the Positive Aspects

While discussing preschool and daycare with your toddler, it is important that you talk about positive and fun things. Focus on how enjoyable it would be to meet other children, make new

friends and play with new toys. Lay emphasis that it would be a great way to spend the day, and avoid focusing on the point that it would mean being away from home.

Use Supportive Words and Actions

When dropping your toddler off as well as beforehand, there may be crying and clinging. Don't scold, threaten, bribe or otherwise be harsh. Instead, talk to the teacher and find out what activities children would be doing that day, especially the first one. Describe the activity vividly to your toddler and try to get him involved in it. All the while, be supportive, hug and kiss goodbye and then, make a swift exit.

Be Firm but Not Rigid

While it is important not to succumb to the sobs of your toddler on day one, it is also, important to know when to rethink daycare or preschool options. If the teacher reports that your toddler cries the whole day, or there are nightmares, extreme changes in behavior or similar symptoms, you may want to wait awhile. Chances are he may not just be ready yet and may need some more time.

Establish a Routine

Establishing a routine or ritual of sorts would really help to reduce separation anxiety in toddlers. Picking out outfits for the next day, talking about what happened during the day and ensuring that you leave and return at the same time would alleviate a great deal of anxiety and provide an element of predictability, which would reassure nervous and anxious toddlers.

Using these simple strategies, either in combination with each other or on their own, would enable fearful and anxious toddlers to settle into a new place or situation quite quickly and without too many teary good-byes. Most importantly, as with most things related to toddlers, remember that this, too, shall pass and give way to an independent toddler who would be happy to go off to preschool or daycare.

Read more: http://infantstoddlers.suite101.com/article.cfm/dealing_with_separation_anxiety_in_toddlers#ixzz0PUg7aGQL