

baby NEWS

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Capital District
Child Care Council

The Art of Hi and 'Bye

Reducing the Stress of Separation Anxiety

Greetings and departures are two of the major transitions children must face each day and should be handled with care and sensitivity. These times of day can help build relationships between the parent and the caregiver, as well as the caregiver and the child. Comings and goings can be used as an opportunity to help babies build strong attachments. For some children, separation anxiety can be one of their biggest challenges.

Caregivers must respect and acknowledge the child's feelings and provide a predictable daily routine to make this transition easier for everyone.

What happens first thing in the morning can set the entire day's mood for everyone involved. Caregivers should greet families as they arrive and be sensitive and supportive of both parent's and child's emotional needs. Parents should communicate any information that the caregiver can use to better read their baby's cues during the day? Caregivers should use this time to ask what kind of night and morning the child had. For instance, did the baby sleep well, eat a good breakfast, or start cutting a new tooth? Responsive caregivers can use this time to share information on developmental issues and provide parents with strategies that can be used at home.



Careful
planning &
thoughtful
routines
are best for
reducing
separation
anxiety

These exchanges of information not only improve the quality of care, but also strengthen partnerships.

To help children cope with separation anxiety, caregivers need to act slowly and make good-byes the transition of the moment. Spending time holding the baby while putting away her belongings will help her ease into the day. Babies can be given a favorite object or "lovey" to help them settle as they say good-bye. It should be noted that the needs of children will change according to developmental milestones. It is common for young children to experience surges of separation anxiety.

Young children can also struggle emotionally as parents return to

pick them up at the end of the day. It is as important to ease out of care as carefully and slowly as it was eased into. Parents may be informed on daily care routines and individual successes involving their child's day. Sharing both verbal and written information builds a strong bridge between the parent and the caregiver.

No amount of preparation for separation anxiety will prevent it from happening. Careful planning and attention are the best known ways of helping a child through this stage.

