

# 8

# ways to help with SEPARATION FEARS

for kids starting school

## 1 Make a fun goodbye ritual

**Physical:** Quick secret handshake

**Verbal:** "See ya later alligator!" "After a while crocodile!"

## 2 Do a practice run

Get up and start your day as if you were going to school. Pack up your things, get in the car, and drive on campus. Show your child the drop-off lane and where they will get out (but please do not exit the car during this practice run). Seeing the route will help them mentally prepare for the real thing!

## 3 Read books about connections

- **Llama Llama Misses Mama**
- **The Kissing Hand**
- **The Invisible String**

## 4 Stick to predictable routines

Set and stick to predictable morning, daytime, evening, and bedtime routines as much as possible to get students ready for the routines of the school year.

## 5 Show your excitement

**Instead of:** "I'm really going to miss you while you're at school!"

**Try this:** "I can't wait to hear about the fun things you do with your class!"

## 6 Pack a picture

Send a family photo that can be included in your child's classroom as a reminder of loved ones! They can keep in in their backpack, folder, or pencil box.

## 7 Validate feelings

If your child expresses some sadness or worry about going to school, validate their feelings and let them know it's okay to feel that way. Redirect the conversation to things they can do if they feel worried at school, like picturing a fun activity to do with family after school or looking at their family photo.

## 8 Model a positive goodbye

Give your child a big smile with a confident posture, tell them you can't wait to hear about their day, and then head out! Your child will pick up on your positive energy!

## Remember,

Change can be scary, and separation fears are totally normal. Your child may take some time to adjust to the new routine, but you can trust that they are loved and cared for at school! We're in this together.

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