

Separation



Setting staff have a vital role in helping children to separate confidently from their parents. Children are the only ones who do not know why they have been sent to nursery and it can be a very confusing and anxious time for them. Only 1 in 4 children will not show any separation anxiety.

What are the common difficulties?

- Crying, screaming, clinging and refusing to separate from parent

Why do separation difficulties occur?

- It is a normal part of children's development, particularly between the ages of 6 months - 2 years
- Children are very anxious about a new environment which is busy and noisy
- Children have had little contact with children of their own age before starting nursery
- Children have not left their parent before
- Children have had a difficult experience when they have previously left their parent

How can we help?

- Display a visual timetable in each room so children know what is happening throughout the session
- Ensure your induction paperwork and interview is thorough and gives the parent an opportunity to share the child's likes and dislikes
- Give the parent photos of the setting and staff to show the child (consider child's age) before they start
- Make sure the induction is flexible and, if possible, provide somewhere for the parent to remain on site while the child settles
- Ask parents how they comfort their child when they are upset
- Ask if parent can leave a transitional object for the child
- Always make sure that the parent say goodbye
- Use a first/then board (consider age) with a picture of an activity then a photo of the child's parent so it is clear when they are returning
- Ask parents what songs/rhymes the child likes and sing these
- Decide which member of staff is best to comfort the child

