

# Working With Parents and Caregivers Whose Children Experience Separation Anxiety



## Tips to Explore with Families to help with Separation Anxiety:

- Be consistent when separating from the child, keep it quick and positive
- Reassure the child that you will return and try to give them a timeline they can understand - *“After lunch and your nap, I will be back home”*
- Review coping strategies with the child - *“If you are feeling sad, count to 5 and give your cuddly 2 big hugs”*
- Ensure you as the adult remain calm and take care of your emotions
- Follow through (with leaving) is important for the child to feel safe and secure
- Create a personal goodbye ritual such as a kiss to the hand or a secret handshake
- Laminate a family photo that the child can carry with them

**Separation anxiety is common in children but may be worrisome when it becomes severe, long lasting and interferes in life. This may indicate separation anxiety disorder. If you are concerned about separation anxiety in your child please consult your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pediatrician.**

## Signs of Separation Anxiety Disorder in Children:

- Separation Anxiety presents as severe, long lasting and interferes with Life
- Constant, excessive worry about losing a parent or loved one to illness or disaster
- Panic or temper tantrums at times of separation
- Constant worry that something bad will happen to them - *ie. Being kidnapped or lost*
- Refusing to be away from home
- Repeated nightmares
- Frequent complaints of headaches, stomach aches or other symptoms when anticipating separation
- Refusing to go to school

## Articles:



**Nurtured First** – This blog from psychotherapist Jessica Vanderweir takes us through steps to help a child through separation anxiety including practice tips, coping strategies and the importance of consistency through the process.

<https://nurturedfirst.com/how-to-help-your-child-with-separation-anxiety/>



**Here To Help** – Anxiety Canada through HeretoHelp uses this article to describe Separation Anxiety Disorder and what symptoms you may see physically, behaviourally, as well as what anxious thoughts a child may have who suffers with this disorder.

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/separation-anxiety-disorder>



**Anxiety Canada** – Adults can also experience separation anxiety, which can result in separation anxiety disorder. This article explains the signs and symptoms and the effect this disorder can have on adults.

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/disorders/separation-anxiety-in-adults/>



**Psychology Today** – This article digs deeper into Separation Anxiety Disorder, its symptoms, causes and ways to treat it.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/conditions/separation-anxiety>

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## Videos:



**Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba** – From Anxiety Disorders of Manitoba we are given some practical tips to help children work through anxiety. It also mentions the signs and symptoms and identifies the four most common types of childhood anxiety.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri1CKtfyEuE>