

Separation Anxiety in Children



Signs Of Separation Anxiety In Children:

- Your child becomes clingier when you leave them even for short periods of time
- They cry and/or cling to you in new situations
- They refuse to sleep without you or another caregiver nearby
- They start to cry at night after they have already been sleeping through the night

Ways To Support Your Child:

- Practice short separations and work towards longer ones - *Go for a walk or a short drive while your partner or another caregiver spends time with your child*
- Talk about what you are going to do together later - *After your snack, I am going to pick you up and we are going to go home and have supper together*
- Allow them to keep something with them that they love such as a stuffed animal or blanket
- Comfort them when they are afraid - *“That thunder is very loud, let’s cuddle and listen to music together”*
- Introduce someone new gradually - *A babysitter or new friend*
- As hard as it is for both adult and child, make your goodbye quick and positive - *“It’s time for me to go but I love you and I will be back soon. I know you will have fun.”*
- Read books about separation fears - *The Kissing Hand (Audrey Penn), Bye Bye Time (Elizabeth Verdick), Owl Babies (Martin Waddell), Llama Llama Misses Mama (Anna Dewdney)*
- Try not to linger around as they may sense your reluctance and anxiety
- Remind them how much you love 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.

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>



Anxiety Canada – This video takes you through what the first day of school may look like and tips to ease anxiety along the way.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_5eiYlo1XM&t=23s



Child Mind Institute – This video shares examples of what you may see as a parent and caregiver of a child with Separation Anxiety Disorder and the benefits of seeking treatment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=063CXAGEOv0>

Articles:



LaLeche League of Canada – From the LaLeche League of Canada, this article tells us how babies this age start to get upset when their parent or caregiver leaves the room. It goes on to give some simple games you can engage in to support this stage of development.

<https://www.lllc.ca/separation-anxiety-babies-8-12-months>



Parents Canada – An age by age guide sharing with us how to cope with separation anxiety in children. It gives some great strategies to try to help your child feel less anxious when you need to leave them.

<https://www.lllc.ca/separation-anxiety-babies-8-12-months>



Canadian Child Care Federation – The Canadian Child Care Federation walks us through how to support your child and yourself as you transition to a new child care arrangement. This change could cause separation anxiety for both you and your child.

<https://cccf-fcsge.ca/ece-resources/topics/preparing-the-learning-environment/coping-separation-anxiety/>



CMAS Canada – A guide to how to separate gradually from your child when you have to go back to work or back to school. Ultimately it is about recognizing what each child needs whether it is time or simply a favourite toy or blanket.

[https://cmascanada.ca/wp-](https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Gradual_Separations_Translated_PDF/gradualseparation_no)

[content/uploads/2017/11/Gradual_Separations_Translated_PDF/gradualseparation_no_v7_final_English.pdf](https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Gradual_Separations_Translated_PDF/gradualseparation_no_v7_final_English.pdf)