Separation Anxiety

Remember separation is stressful for your child. Children show their feelings about separation according to their personality. Previous experiences with separation will influence a child’s anxiety. Children experience developmental peaks in separation anxiety.

Parents and Child Care Providers can take action.
- Participate in a phase-in period where the parent can stay for a longer time when the child first comes.
- Accept the child’s fear about separation anxiety.
- Consider other sources of anxiety.
- Reduce adult conversation time at pickup time.
- Communicate together and develop a plan to help the child.

Actions that a parent can take.
- Spend time with your child prior to drop off.
- Bring a security item.
- Create a drop off and arrival routine.
- Plan what you will do together at home after pickup.
- Say good-bye before leaving.
- Leave promptly.
- Understand that sometimes children cry to make their parents feel guilty.

Actions that a Child Care Provider can take.
- Daily greet the child.
- Allow a security item from home.
- Have activities ready to engage the child.
- Build a relationship with the child.
- Play next to the child.
- Create a routine for saying goodbye.
- Reassure the parent that the child will be okay and that their child will stop crying.
- Avoid quick movements and physical touch unless requested.

Read the book The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn to help reassure the children. This book can be checked out from the Child Care Resource and Referral library.

- Additional Books that you can read.
  - Owen by Kevin Henkes
  - Chester’s Way by Kevin Henkes
  - Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes
  - Mama, If You Had a Wish by Jeanne Modesitt
  - I Love You, Little One by Nancy Tafuri
  - My Love For You by Susan L. Roth
  - Oh My Baby, Little One by Kathi Appelt
  - I’ll Always Love You by Paeony Lewis
  - When Mama Comes Home Tonight by Eileen Spinelli