

Gum Nut

Preschool and Childcare



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We respectfully acknowledge
the Traditional Owners
of this land:

The Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung,
Taungurung, Djadjawurrung
and the Wathaurung people
who make up the Kulin Nation.

I Hate Drop Offs!!!: Separation anxiety.

Drop off can be emotionally challenging and a little traumatising for both parent and child, especially new families, it is a normal behaviour for children.

As Early childhood educators we have witnessed many, many drop offs and know children come through it, many children settle quickly, often once you are the other side of the gate. However we are extremely aware and empathetic that this is new for you and difficult, we are here to support you.

Below is an article that might provide useful information for you.

What I Learned About Child Care and Dealing with Separation Anxiety

by Deborah Jepsen

(From Melbourne Child Psychology)

Kids are hard work!

"They bring us, as parents, so much joy and laughter and so many smiles ... but also an overwhelming sense of responsibility for their welfare.

Then there comes that time in their early years when your child starts childcare. And so along with the joy of caring for a young toddler, there comes the joy of letting them go (at least for the day)!

My son is now in childcare for two days per week at the moment and I HATE drop offs! The first day was the worst. He was so upset...but I put on my brave face and did a quick good bye. I cried myself on the way home. But it's slowly getting easier...

Most research suggests that separation anxiety increases until a child is about 15 months old and peaks at around 18 months (my son is 16 months!).

Not every child will experience separation anxiety. It depends on temperament, context and adult behaviour.

On a positive note, the mere existence of separation anxiety means that your child has reached another milestone. It means your child now understands that you still exist even when you are not in sight! 😊

Separation anxiety is not a disorder. It is a normal part of development. Mums and dads need to be calm and realise that it will pass (as will those sleepless nights...or will they?!).

The next developmental milestone is the formation of and goings, a It is a normal part of development. Mums and dads need to be calm and realise that it will pass (as will those sleepless nights...or will they?!).

The next developmental milestone is the formation of a reciprocal relationship. The rapid brain and language development that occurs from around 18 months to 2 years of age allows a child to understand their parents comings But, most importantly, they are able to predict returns!"



“ Tips to reduce separation anxiety in young children on drop off.

- Explain to your child what will happen during their day. E.g., “Today you are going to have fun with your friends and play in the big sand pit!”
- Keep drop-offs short and sweet. Hand over to a teacher, who will hopefully distract your child and get them engaged in a fun activity. (At my day care centre the main teacher is quick to take my son outside see the guinea pigs.
- Don't prolong goodbyes!
As hard as it is to leave your little one while they are upset, a drawn out goodbye makes it far worse for EVERYONE!
- Have a transition toy for your child. It helps them to settle.
- Project confidence. Try to remain calm and relaxed.
- If you are feeling anxious it is important to not show this to your child.
- Don't sneak away without saying goodbye.
- Have faith in the staff. They deal with kids all day everyday and they know what to do. They will distract and soothe your child if they are initially upset.
- Try and keep to the same routine for the first few weeks.”

These are tips we also provide and recommend, over the years they have proven to be successful/helpful, therefore it is good to read same tips from a parent.

As hard as it is do keep calm, children have a wonderful ability to pick up on your feelings.

Another consideration is some children do re visit separation anxiety or as we sometimes call it eparayion blues at an older age, it may only last a short time it might stem from changes in the home environment, example: new sibling, moving house, visitors etc, best we talk with children and support them through this period to find the cause.

“I can certainly relate to the title of this article: [Separation Anxiety: 19 Ways to Ease Your Child's Fears \(So You Can Both Stop Crying!\)](#). It includes some really useful information and practical tips.

Also check out [Separation Anxiety in Children](#). This website gives some useful tips and discusses “separation disorder”. Separation anxiety is normal but if it continues to happen frequently after 2 years of age this likely to be a more serious problem.

Starting day care has many benefits and once you get past the initial drop off drama it is great to see the little ones playing and having fun as a group. The socialisation aspect is enjoyable for children and also a necessity for normal development.

We live in a social world and the quicker our children learn to communicate with others — verbally and non-verbally — the happier and more well adjusted they will be later on.

Parenting is hard work and transitioning to child care is often hard for parents and little ones alike.

But it's all worth it when you finally see your toddler starting to learn, explore and thrive in their new environment.”

We are here to support you and your child through this transition, always available to chat with you.

It would be good to receive your feedback on this article and your experiences.

Gum Nut Preschool and Childcare Team.