



Ready for Child Care

Visit ahead of time, practice a reassuring goodbye, and get ready for child care.

Helps Your Child Grow



Emotional Functioning

Becoming familiar with the setting, using a consistent goodbye ritual, and receiving comfort from a teacher provide predictable adult support during separation.

Steps

- Crying or holding tightly to you at preschool drop-off is not misbehavior. Your child may still feel unsure about the unfamiliar setting and the separation.
- Before the first day, visit the preschool if it allows families to do so. Look at the classroom, restroom, and nap area, try a familiar toy, and let your child meet the teacher.
- At each drop-off, use the same short goodbye ritual: a kiss, a firm hug, and a clear statement about when you will return. Then leave so the sequence stays predictable.
- If your child keeps holding on, use a very short countdown. Stay until it ends, then calmly and firmly hand them to the teacher.
- You can give the teacher a familiar comfort item in advance and ask them to help your child join a new activity after you leave.

Tips

- Separations are harder when your child is tired, hungry, unwell, or adjusting to a recent change. Before preschool, help them arrive rested and fed. If they are not feeling well, tell the teacher so expectations can be adjusted.

Observations

- ☐ Stays calm after saying goodbye to you at the childcare center entrance
- ☐ Looks for or waits for you after you leave, expecting you to return