



Easing the Transition from Home to School



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As young children transition to the classroom there can be some anxiety for both the child and caregivers and entering a new environment with new faces can be difficult for anyone. The pain of separation seems to hurt us more than our children. Fortunately, most children quickly adapt to their new environment.

Here are some tips to help transitions and separations:

- **Know Your Child and Realize that Each Child's Response Is Different.**
We all want our children to take to their caregivers with eager enthusiasm, but children's responses to transition and separation depend upon their age, temperament, and personal experiences.
- **Be Positive.** Our children have incredible intuitive skills. They sense our anxiety and hesitation. As the first day for transition draws near, begin talking to your child about what to expect and about any concerns or fears they might have. Talk about school as a place where he/she will learn new things and make friends.
- **Establish a Drop-Off Ritual.**
Developing a quick, simple way to say "good-bye/doksta" and reassuring our children that we will return will help separation go more smoothly. Sneaking out creates a sense of mistrust and adds more stress and anxiety for everyone.
- **Tune-In to Your Child's Behavior.**
During times of change, our children may have behavior regressions, delayed reactions or even outbursts at pick-up time. It is all normal. We can reassure them with positive comments, physical affection, and love.
- **Make a Connection between Home and School.** Young children do better when they know their loved one is thinking of them as often as they think of their loved one. We want to intentionally include children's primary caregivers to strengthen the connection between adult and child. Bringing photos from home to keep in the classroom is a good way to bring the family into the class even when they are away from their child.
- **Contact CWOO to See How the Day Is Going.** If our children are upset when we leave them, we can feel uneasy or guilty. Just knowing they are okay can help us as parents and caregivers settle down and have a good day. Your family advocate will be able to provide update(s) throughout the day.

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Adapting to transition and overcoming separation anxiety may take time for some of us, both young and old. Transition times are learning times for our children and us. Remember that becoming comfortable in a new classroom is an ongoing process, not just a single event. Our children learn through consistent experience that each goodbye, as hard as it may be, is followed by our happy return. We hope these suggestions are helpful and can't wait to see you again 😊