

Module 6: Family and Community Partnerships

- a. Less aggressive and/or impulsive
 - b. Less withdrawn
 - c. More thoughtful in play
 - d. Better able to build meaningful relationships, and
 - e. More flexible and cooperative in general.
- 4. Separation is harder for some children than others.** Children’s temperaments and life experiences may make separation particularly hard for some. It may be a large issue about which they need to cry hard many times over. For these children, you can expect to see gradual, positive change as they work through their grief and fear.
- 5. Share other suggestions for families that may help with separation:**
- a. A **“transition object.”** Bring something that reminds the child of her/his family to child care. Ideas include a blanket, stuffed animal, family photo, or something that smells like home.
 - b. Establish a **regular schedule** since predictable routines make children feel more secure. When a child comes to and from child care at the same times daily it makes the adjustment easier.
 - c. **Prepare the child ahead of time** by visiting child-care with them before returning to work so s/he can meet his teacher and explore the environment with you present. Families can also practice separations through play or books.
 - d. **Tell the child when you’ll return in terms s/he understands** (“Mommy will pick you up after naptime,” rather than 3 pm). Reassure her/him that Daddy (or Grandpa or Auntie May) *always* comes back! Be sure to call if late so the caregiver can reassure the child.
 - e. **Explain that some children object to separations more** than others— and it does not mean that their child loves his family less if s/he doesn’t want to leave for home, or falls apart when you arrive. For some children, transitions are particularly hard, and children feel safe expressing their strong feelings in the presence of their parents when they are strongly attached to them. (Note: if a child doesn’t want to leave because s/he seems genuinely afraid of her parent, please see Module 6: Healthy Practices regarding signs of abuse.)

References: Brinamen, C. & Page, F. (Nov, 2012). Using Relationships to Heal Trauma: Reflective Practice Creates a Therapeutic Preschool. *Young Children*, 67(5), 40-48. Siegel, D. & Hartzell, M. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out: How a deeper self-understanding can help you raise children who thrive*. New York: Penguin/Putnam. *Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines*. (2012) p. 20, 32, 58. Department of Early Learning. Wipfler, P. (2006) *Building emotional understanding: A course for parents and child care professionals*. Hand in Hand Parenting. Wipfler, P. Separation Anxiety Recovery. <http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/44/64/Separation-Anxiety-Recovery>