Managing Separation Anxiety in Preschool-Aged Children

The full article can be found at: https://blog.himama.com/managing-preschooler-separation-anxiety/

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Every preschool teacher has been there. School has just started, you have a new group of children, everyone is excited and a little anxious about their new environment, new friends, new teacher, new everything!

Separation anxiety is a very normal part of early childhood development and it happens at all ages and stages. Handling separation anxiety isn’t only about managing an individual child, it is also about working with their parents through it all, creating a safe and welcoming environment for your kids to come back to, and most importantly, teaching the children how to process, articulate and work through their feelings!

The Facts by Age Group

Separation anxiety develops as a child begins to understand the concept of object permanence, which is the idea that something continues to exist when it can’t be seen or heard.

The thought process goes something like:

Wait, dad was there a second ago. I know he’s somewhere, but where is he now? Will he come back? Where is dad?!

It can be pretty stressful on a child, but the good news is that it will pass and there are systems in place that you as an early childhood educator can use to help teach them that it’s okay! While it is common for separation anxiety to be most prominent between 18-months and 3 years of age, children of all ages go through it to a certain degree.

Separation Anxiety in Babies

Four- to Five-month old babies can show an understanding of object per-

(Continued on page 3)
September Professional Learning Communities

Concept Development

Experts* from the Center for Early Education and Development at the U of M will lead our conversation to help us understand what Concept Development is and how we can improve our practice to support this vital part of a child’s development.

Concept Development is one of the Dimensions of the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System). CLASS is a tool developed to evaluate the level of interactions in early education classrooms. While it is developed for center and preschool assessment, the concepts are equally important in family child care early education programs.

*Ashley Midthun (Woodbury) and Kristina Erstad-Sankey (Blaine)

Thursday, September 12, 2019
6:30-8:30pm
Jerry’s Food Store
7760 Hargis Parkway
Room 2
Woodbury MN 55129

Please RSVP to:
Annette Borman
aborman@accap.org
763-783-4711

Tuesday, September 17, 2019
6:30-8:30pm
Blaine Human Service Center
1201 89th Ave NE
Room 204
Blaine MN 55434

If you will need an interpreter please contact us seven (7) days before event

Learn more about how you can be Parent Aware Rated by attending one of our information sessions

November 12, 2019
1:30-3:00pm
6:30-8:00pm

Information sessions will be held in Anoka County and in Washington County
Locations to be announced

Dates for online webinar information sessions will also be announced soon!

Typical Development at 9-months

Find out more about typical development at 9-months, including a short video explaining typical development and things you can do to support the baby’s healthy growth and development.

Separation Anxiety continued

manence, but 9 months is usually when they start responding to it . . .

Separation Anxiety in Toddlers
As a baby grows into the toddler stage, separation anxiety becomes more difficult, especially around the 18-month mark. We are all familiar with the Terrible Twos and separation anxiety can be particularly challenging at this age. . .

Separation Anxiety in Preschoolers
By the time they turn 3, most children will grasp an understanding of how their behavior is affecting the adults around them. Consistency is key at this stage as young children can and will push their boundaries by pleading with their parents or throwing tantrums to get their way. . .

What Can I do As A Preschool Teacher?
Now that we’ve gone through what to expect at each stage, let’s look at what you can do as a teacher to work through separation anxiety when it does happen!

Clarify Expectations to Parents and Preschoolers
Sometimes, parents can encourage separation anxiety without intending to. The first day of preschool is an emotional day. However, by indulging their child’s plea to stay longer, they are prolonging the feeling of anxiety and disrupting the class. . .

Encourage Goodbye Rituals and Transitions
Part of being a preschool teacher is supporting new young parents too! You can suggest goodbye rituals that are fun for kids and parents to take the stress out of having to leave. . .

Be Attentive and Present With Young Children
Drop-off is one of the most hectic parts of the day in child care. You’re talking to parents, checking the kids in, making sure everyone is accounted for and settling everyone down. Take a breath here and be present with your classroom. . .

Once the Preschool Activity Starts, It Starts
We’ve all been there when there’s a parent who comes back for their child. This usually happens after a rough drop-off and if the child is having a particularly rough morning. . .

Talk About Emotions with Young Children
Okay, so tantrums happen and sometimes they happen a lot. That’s totally normal! Set your kids up for success by talking about their feelings. Do this consistently as part of your teaching process a few times a week. . .

Know Your Preschool Group
The start of each new school year brings a new group dynamic for you to navigate. Knowing each child in your class is important — what delights them, what triggers them and how they prefer to be comforted is so key to working with your children and their families. . .

Keep Your Cool
Things can quickly get out of hand if you have a hysterical child. But remember, it’s your classroom and you are in control. Keeping your cool and remembering that the kids are just figuring things out is so important. Create some space by having a calm zone in your classroom where an overstimulated child can remove themselves from the group and calm down. Make this space known to the group as somewhere they can go to be alone if they need some space. Once the child has calmed down enough to have a conversation, address the elephant in the room and talk about the outburst. It’s not always easy, but this helps with a child’s socioemotional development. Explain that their parent will come back for them just as they did yesterday. Maintaining empathy and relating to the child helps them feel supported and safe in your class!

Building a trust-based relationship is important to make sure that everyone (parents and kiddos) is feeling alright at drop-off. What are your strategies for supporting children with separation anxiety? Do you have fun activities or smart transitions that you use?
Special Days in September

3rd  Skyscraper Day
5th  Cheese Pizza Day
6th  Read a Book Day
9th  Teddy Bear Day
10th Swap Ideas Day
12th Chocolate Milk Shake Day
13th Fortune Cookie Day
15th Make a Hat Day
16th Collect Rocks Day
16th National Play Doh Day
18th National Cheeseburger Day
19TH International Talk Like A Pirate Day
21st Miniature Golf Day
22nd Elephant Appreciation Day
23rd Checkers Day
25th National Comic Book Day
28th International Rabbit Day

**BUILD A SKYSCRAPER!**

**EDIBLE ENGINEERING**

Use toothpicks and a variety of foods to build a skyscraper. You can use gum drops, apples, cheese cubes, marshmallows, etc.

**USE STRAWS FOR BUILDING STRUCTURES**

Straws can be used with play dough, tape, or pipe cleaners to support your skyscraper.

**TOOTHPICKS AND POOL NOODLES, STYROFOAM CHUNKS, OR STYROFOAM PEANUTS**

If you want to use toothpicks and something other than candy or food items, try pool noodles or any other styrofoam that is chunky. Slice up a pool noodle to make pool noodle structures.

“Shake It”

(Share this rhyme in a quiet voice)

Shake it baby, shake it (Wiggle hips side to side)
Shake it if you can (Keep wiggling)
Shake it like a milkshake and do the best you can (Wiggle hips some more)
Rumble to the bottom and rumble to the top (Wiggle down to the ground rolling, arms in front, then wiggle back up rolling arms)
Turn around and turn around until you make it **STOP** (Spin around with one arm extended until you shout the word **STOP**)

**Ahoy, Matey! Avast! Arrrr!**

“Round and Round the Garden”

Round and round the garden (circle fingers on baby’s palm)
Like the teddy bear
One step, two steps, (walk fingers up baby’s arm)
Tickly under there. (tickle under arm)