How you can help



How can you help your child feel better when separating from you?

Try some of these ideas:

- ❑ Try asking a grandparent or friend to take them to school
- ❑ Give your child something to look after that belongs to you
- ❑ Talk to school and see if they can give your child a special job to do when they arrive
- ❑ Be consistent, firm and patient
- ❑ Don't sneak away
- ❑ Celebrate their achievement if they manage to go into school without any issues
- ❑ Give them small, achievable targets such as 'getting ready for school or bed quickly'
- ❑ Have a bedtime routine and reassurance you are just downstairs
- ❑ Try to find out if there is any underlying reason why they don't want to leave you. Once you know it can easily be fixed.
- ❑ Colour in a heart together and cut it in half. You both keep a half each

If you need any further support, please contact:

Stephanie Crispin
stephanie.crispin@hollybrookschools.co.uk
02380 771528

The Hollybrook Schools Infant and Junior

Making a separation plan



A separation plan is a great idea to do with your child BUT when they are NOT feeling anxious.

Spend some time together thinking about how your child can separate from you without it causing distress or anxiety. Ask for their input. It might go something like this:

1 Get ready for school quickly.
2 Arrive at school holding your hand.
3 Smiling at you and giving you a hug and a kiss.
4 You will give them something to look after.
5 They will walk into school by themselves.
6 They will look back and give you a wave and a smile.

It sounds very simple but it is very effective. Write down the steps on a piece of paper and agree it together.

Pop it onto your fridge door as a reminder. Go through it often.

If your child manages to do this then give them lots of positive praise and be specific with that praise.

You were amazing today, you gave me the best smile I have ever seen!

If they don't manage to follow the plan then lots of reassurance that it is ok and they can try again tomorrow.

For resources go to www.elsa-support.co.uk



ABOUT SEPARATION ANXIETY

A guide for parents

ELSA support

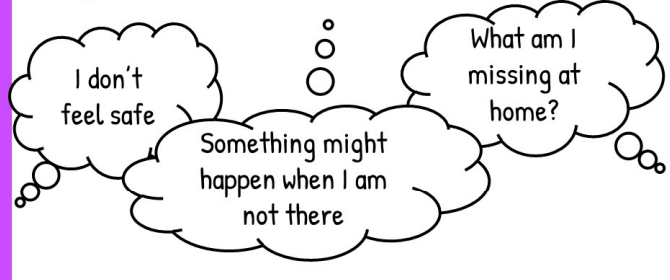
What is separation anxiety?

Separation anxiety is when your child doesn't want to leave you. They feel anxious at being apart from you.

Separation anxiety might happen:

- ❑ When you take them to school
- ❑ When they need to go to bed
- ❑ When you need to leave them somewhere without you

Your child will have lots of thoughts when they separate from you. Their anxiety is very real.
Thoughts could be:



Ask them to tell you what their thoughts are when you leave them somewhere.

Your child will have a range of feelings such as

- ❑ Fear
- ❑ Anxiety
- ❑ Anger
- ❑ Confusion
- ❑ Sadness



Ask them if they can tell you what they are feeling. Verbalising and labelling a feeling such as 'I feel scared because...' is a HUGE step to overcoming the problem.

Body feelings

When your child is anxious there is lots going on in their body. Physical feelings that make things feel even worse for them.

They may have:

- ❑ A raised heart rate
- ❑ Fast breathing
- ❑ Tummy ache
- ❑ Nausea
- ❑ Tense muscles
- ❑ Dizziness
- ❑ Buzzing or ringing in the ears
- ❑ Headache
- ❑ Shaking or trembling
- ❑ Being hot and bothered

There will be a whole range of sensations going on in their bodies. These are very real and are due to the adrenaline response. Their bodies are getting them ready to fight or run away from a situation.

This can feel incredibly scary, and that tummy ache is very real to your child even though the likelihood is that it is from their anxiety not a physical cause.



ELSA support

Behaviours

The adrenaline response with anxiety can cause difficult behaviours in your child. It is so easy to understand how those feelings escalate once you understand how they are feeling and their bodies are feeling..

They might be:

- ❑ Clingy
- ❑ Have nightmares
- ❑ Have trouble sleeping
- ❑ Be physically aggressive
- ❑ Crying
- ❑ Running away

They might try delaying tactics to avoid a situation. For example, taking forever to eat their cereal or not getting things ready for school.

Try to stay calm at all times when your child is behaving in this way. They really can't help it.

Make sure you validate their feelings. This means reassuring them that everyone feels anxious sometimes. Their feeling is normal and you totally understand why they feel that way. Use your best listening skills to hear what your child is saying. Give them your full attention.

