



✓ If your child is starting at daycare or preschool, take them for a visit before their first day, and do a few dry runs, travelling to and from the setting. If this is not possible, ask a member of the child care staff to email some photos of the space beforehand to show your child. Together, look for fun things they might like to explore in person.

✓ Show confidence that your child is in good hands, and that they can handle it.

✓ Resist sneaking off while your child is distracted.

✓ Make up a goodbye ritual (e.g., a specific kiss and a snuggle goodbye, a secret nose rub or a boisterous high five). Eventually the goodbye ritual should be short and sweet.

✓ Use simple drawings or photos, sometimes called social stories, to create a personalized little storybook that walks through the steps of arrival so your child can understand what to expect. For example: "We are going to walk in the door at daycare. Mommy will help you take off your coat and shoes. We will say hi to teacher and your friends. Mommy will give you one hug and our special snuggle. Then you will take teacher's hand and go play with your friends."

✓ Give your child a special object to hold on to, such as a family photograph, a heart-shaped rock, a scarf, a comforting toy (e.g., you hold the "parent" stuffy and your child can take care of the "baby" stuffy until they can come back together at pick-up). **It is important to tell child care staff that you are doing this so they can support you and your child.**

✓ Focus your child's attention on the moment of getting back together: "I can't wait to meet you right over there near the cubbies and give you a big bear hug!"

✓ Lingering can lead to increasing anxiety. Going back for another hug and kiss can be confusing.



Here are some helpful storybooks, with their suggested age ranges:

Jeanette Bradley, *Love, Mama*, 2–5
Tracey Corderoy, *I Want My Mommy*, 3–5
Michael Dahl, *Penguin Misses Mom*, 3–5
Kimberly Gee, *Sad, Sad Bear*, 2–5
Laurel Goodluck, *Forever Cousins*, 4–6

Patrice Karst, *The Invisible String*, 3–8
Audrey Penn, *The Kissing Hand*, 4–6
Dan Riskin, *Fiona the Fruit Bat*, 4–7
Cornelia Spelman, *When I Miss You*, 3–5