

- ❖ Remain calm. Emotions are contagious, so display the feelings you want your child to “catch”. Don’t fret, worry, look anxious or hesitant. Remain cheerful, smile and say good-bye with confidence. No matter how loudly your child may scream or beg...keep smiling.
- ❖ Don’t drag out your good-byes. Explain to your child that you are going to leave him with the teacher at school and tell him exactly when you’ll return. You might say, for example, “I’m leaving now, but I’ll be back at 3:00 p.m.”
- ❖ Don’t discourage tears. It is unreasonable to ask your children to stop crying or to be brave. Let him cry. It’s his way of expressing how he feels and your opportunity to offer understanding. Say, “I know you feel sad when I leave, but I must go, and I’ll see you after school.” This assures your child that you aren’t ignoring or misinterpreting his feelings, and it helps him accept the separation is inevitable.
- ❖ Never sneak out. It’s very tempting to dodge out the back door when your child is distracted for a moment, but don’t. Eventually, your child will notice your disappearance, and then he has no way of knowing that he hasn’t been abandoned forever. Always be honest and direct. Say, “Good-bye. I’m leaving now and I’ll be back at 3:00.” Then leave!
- ❖ Return with a smile. Your child (who was probably quite content while you were gone) may burst into tears, run to your arms, cling to you for dear life, or completely ignore you. Any response is perfectly normal, but you should continue teaching the lesson of separation by remaining cheerful and calm. A parent who gets teary and exclaims, “I’ve missed you so much. Are you okay? Did you miss me?” teaches the child that there really is danger in being separated. Focus on the positive by saying something like, “Your teacher said you had fun playing with blocks today.”
- ❖ Be on time. It is important to drop your child off on time and be prompt when picking up your child. A child who enters a classroom late may miss some of the morning routine and become upset. In addition, if you are late picking your child up, your child may begin to fear that you are not returning. Also, let your child know if someone else will be picking him up at the end of the day.
- ❖ Send an item from home. If your child continues to have difficulty separating from you, he may keep a picture of you or a small item that reminds him of home in his tote bag.