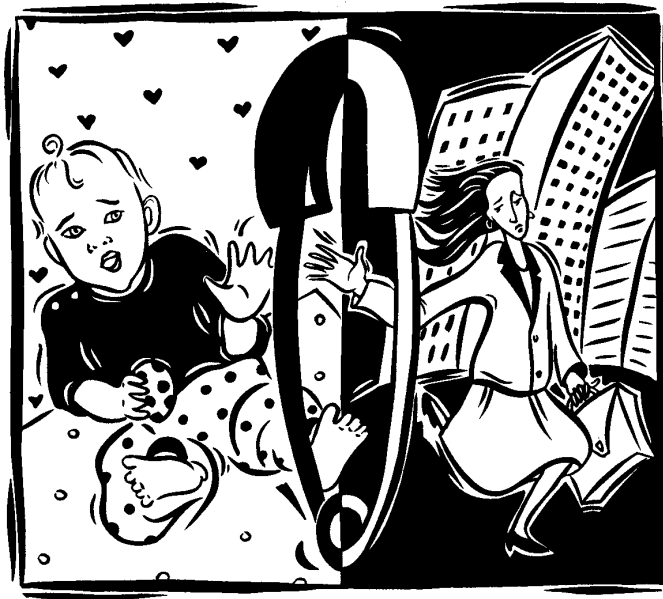




Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is the strong negative reaction your child has when you leave him with a caregiver. Crying loudly, whining, even screaming are all typical reactions to being separated from his parents, even when he is left with a familiar person.



Separation anxiety is normal and healthy. It usually begins around 9 months, when your baby is old enough to understand that you're leaving. Like any other phase your child goes through, there are some things you can do to make it easier on you both.

- **Always say goodbye; never sneak out.**
- **If your child is mobile and tries to follow you, enlist the help of your caregiver.**
- **Don't allow long and drawn-out goodbyes. Decide before you leave how many hugs and kisses are OK.**
- **Act confident that your child will be OK, so he will feel confident, too.**
- **Try to leave calmly and avoid bribes.**

Set Up a Routine

Set up and follow a regular routine before leaving your child. Understand that you and your child may need a little transition time together before you leave. When it's time to go, follow your goodbye routine. Have special hugs or kisses saved just for goodbyes. Chat with the caregiver, play a quick game or help put your child's things where they belong.

Extras

When it's time to pick up your child from the caregiver's, always greet him with a happy, glad-to-see you attitude, no matter how bad your day was. If guilty feelings come up, don't tell your child. Talking about sad feelings is fine, but guilt is a subject to discuss with an adult.

Warning

Avoid assuming that your baby's cries are always from separation anxiety. Make sure he's not upset because he's in a harmful situation. Look for warning signs of mishandling or abuse. Make unannounced visits to the child care provider if you have any worries.