

Transitioning your child into Preschool.

Do’s and Don’t

Don’t: Sneak Out of The Room When Your Child Isn’t Looking.

Doing so is an easy way to avoid having a child you love scream in your face, but it doesn’t help the problem. Your child is crying because they are afraid of abandonment. When they look up to see their parent has left stealthily, the fear is reinforced.

Do: Say Goodbye and Tell Your Child That You Have To Go But Assure him/her That You Will Be Back.

Give them a routine hug, kiss or special “goodbye-see you later” parting line you normally share with your child before you leave.

If you prolong the departure, it will give your child the idea that there’s something to be afraid of. But the tough part is to not let the sobbing lure you back. Reappearing after you’ve left only gives your child the incentive to cry harder and longer next time.



Don’t: Look Scared and Sad Yourself.

The way young children assess their safety in a situation is by reading their parent’s face. If you look like you are scared or about to cry, it will not convey that the situation that they are in is safe. Rather, it will amplify their anxiety and insecurity.

Do: Smile and Tell Them That You Know They Will Have Fun in Preschool.

Let them see on your face that they are safe and there is nothing for them to worry about. This is a difficult time when you need to be strong for your child. Show them your biggest confident smile as you leave. Your child can sense your confidence as you walk out the door. Show them a happy face and a cheerful wave. They will know that you feel good about who they are with, and that they can feel that too!

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Do’s and Don’t

Don’t: Show Indifference To Your Child’s Tears.

It is important that they know that you care when they are sad. Don’t scold them for crying or act frustrated by their emotions. Doing so will only add a sense of parental disappointment to their ongoing anxiety.

Do: Reassure Them

Remind them that you know they will have a fun day at school, even though they are sad right now. Remind them that you (or whoever else) are coming back to get them.

You could plan an activity that you will do together after school. This will give them a reminder of your return, and give the teachers a way to break through the sense of abandonment. Example: When a child is crying, is very comforting for a teacher to be able to say, “I heard your Dad is taking you to the park after Sunday School. That sounds fun! What do you like to do at the park? I heard you like playing football.”

You will be able to see a change in their countenance, perhaps even a smile as they look forward to that. Imagine, only a minute ago, all they could think about was how alone they felt and how sad they were. Now they are excited for the fun time they will soon have with their parent!



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