

I'm sure that my child will have  
separation issues!  
How do you handle this?



This is, of course, a common occurrence with 3 year olds. It is often a common occurrence with PARENTS of 3 year olds (LOL). There are a few specific ways that you can prepare your child for his first day of school.

- 1) Bring your child to the school, either for the tour, the Open House or just to come in and meet the teachers. Show her where the bathroom is, where she'll hang up her coat, etc.
- 2) After you have brought your child into our school, you should make sure that he knows that this is the school that you have chosen for him. Let him know that you, the parent(s), think that these are the best teachers in the whole, wide world and that you're confident that he will be very happy here.
- 3) Give your child opportunities BEFORE school starts to be without you for a period of time. Perhaps a play date with a buddy that's her age would be fun? Perhaps the nursery at your church? Perhaps spending time with G'ma or cousins? This will give her the confidence and the knowledge that you WILL come back. Please, do not make the first day of school, the first day that you leave her somewhere as this is an unfair expectation to place on your child.

Here's how we handle the first day of school: (You get to choose your ending! Because we believe strongly in having an Open Door Policy, we make this your choice.)

Ending 1 (the goal) - You drop your child off in the car line like everyone else (our day to day normal operation). If he cries we will take him into the classroom and hold him, read to him, wipe his tears away and soon (usually within  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour) he will become interested in one of the many activities that we've designed for him. As soon as this happens (and as soon as we are able) we will text you a picture of your child happily working. (Please know that IF your child is not able to engage, we will call you. We will - we promise!) Note that with Ending 1, he may shed a few tears each day for the next 3 or 4 days but the teary session will be shorter with each passing day.

Ending 2 - You come into the classroom with your child and tell her that you're going to stay for awhile. She may nervously cling to you, not knowing exactly when you are going to leave. When you do leave, she may cry loudly and sit by the door until she is either distracted by an activity or until class time is over. We, of course, will attempt to engage her, wipe her tears, etc, as in Ending 1. On her second day of school, you might repeat Ending 2 or try Ending 3, or move to Ending 1 (please reread).

Ending 3 - You drop your child off in the normal way but then you come back into the classroom after an hour or peek through the window, or peek through the fence where the children are playing outside. There is a good chance that your child will see you and begin to cry. He'll run to you and cling to you and will disengage from the school activities. The next day, you can choose Ending 1 (please reread), Ending 2 or repeat Ending 3.

If you choose Ending 2 and/or 3 you can see that you'll just add to the number of days of crying. Eventually we will go through Ending 1. Ironically, Endings 2 and 3, while your intention is to calm your child, will just add more days of crying.

We would also like to let you know that the least of your worries should be US - the staff! We have a combined (almost) 100 years experience and have seen nearly every type of behavior! Your child is not the first one to have trouble adjusting to school and she won't be the last! An upset child is NEVER seen as a reflection of you nor does it affect the way we think of your child. We are here (and we've got SKILLS!) to help her adjust to her new, wonderful learning environment. Trust us! 😊