

“See you later, Mom and Dad”

Learning how to say goodbye to parents for a short period of time will help your child:

- Learn that adults will come back
- Trust other adults
- Learn that he can be safe without you



Ideas to try with your child:

- **Develop a “goodbye” routine.** Having the same routine is reassuring and can be as simple as a goodbye kiss, a high five and “I’ll see you later,” or a special wave through the window.
- **Try not to make a big deal about your exit.** Tell your child you are leaving and that you will return, then *go*—don’t stall or give in to crying.
- **Talk about feelings.** Let children know it is okay to feel afraid, but that they will be well cared for, and you will definitely return. If possible, connect your return with something the child will experience, such as, “I’ll come back after story time.”

If your child is struggling:

- Let your child bring a familiar object along to the place they will stay while you’re gone. Having a favorite toy or photo from home can be a comfort.
- Offer choices to help him or her feel in control when you get to the location. “Do you want to ring the bell, or knock?”
- Distract your child – point out a toy, a friend, or an object in the room. Say goodbye, and quickly leave.
- Always be honest. Never sneak out or offer bribes.

Going further:

- Read the book, *The Kissing Hand*, by Audrey Penn. A kiss on the hand can offer great comfort, remembering that mommy loves me. *Llama Llama Misses Mama*, by Anna Dewdney teaches that the child will have fun even if mom is away.
- Check out Help for Separation Anxiety, here: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/separation_anxiety_causes_prevention_treatment.htm

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 3-4 years** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Separate from important adults, sometimes relying on another adult to feel safe.” *Building Relationships: Ages-3-4 years*, pg. 59