**SEPARATION ANXIETY**

**Separation anxiety is the fear of being separated from a parent or other significant person in a child's life. It is very common in preschool growth and development. Often times, a child has not previously been separated from the primary caregiver and sees himself as an extension of the caregiver so it is painful to be separated.**

**The beginning of a school year is the number one cause of separation anxiety in preschoolers. Some children transition smoothly into school. Others have a tough time in the beginning and display symptoms that vary. One child may react by crying, another by yelling, another by displaying defiance and yet in others extreme quietness.**

**In all cases, it is based on the child’s fears and insecurities of this new situation. This can be a difficult time for the child and the parent. There are many things you can do to help your child with the transition to preschool before, during and after school begins!**

**Here are some tips:**

**1. Read stories!**

**There are many books available that will help you and your child talk about school! Some suggestions are:**

***I Love you All Day Long* by Francesca Rusackas**

***The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn**

***Will I Have a Friend?* By Mariam Cohen**

***The Invisible String*  by Patrice Karst**

 **2. Send in a Family Photo!**

**Bring a small, family photo to school on the first day and hang it in your child’s cubby! Your child can see their family whenever they need to during the day!**

 **3. Decide on a Drop Off Routine!**

**Let your child know in advance what to expect and what will happen when they arrive at school. Doing this before you get to school will help your child feel secure when they arrive.**

**4. SAY GOODBYE to your child and……. LEAVE!**

**This is the most important step to a successful drop off.**

 **If you are running late, please inform your child’s school. When your child knows what to expect, anxiety is decreased.**

 **Separation anxiety can return even after it seems to be gone for good. It might return after a long weekend, a vacation, absence for an illness or a school break. If this happens, follow the previous steps can once again assist your child. This time it will be easier because trust has been built between your child and their school.**

 **If you have concerns about anxiety, please contact your child’s school.**