

Either you've already experienced it, you're in the middle of it, or it's on the horizon. What is it? Separation Anxiety. Pediatricians help us understand that separation anxiety is so tough on kids because they don't understand object permanence. A child realizes Mom is gone and what they think is, "Oh my gosh, MY MOM IS GONE," like forever gone.

It's why we play hide and seek or peekaboo with little ones. We want to reinforce the idea that even though you can't see an object doesn't mean it's gone. The fear produced over this misunderstanding is what we call separation anxiety. It creates an anxiety in our children, and much of the time, an anxiety in us as parents.

Final Thoughts

We can't always be WITH our child, but there is One who is ALWAYS with them. And not only is Jesus always with them, His affection for them is always present.

Romans 8:35-39 says: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Source: ministrytoparents.com

Overcoming Separation Anxiety



Separation Anxiety

Although almost every child will deal with some level of separation anxiety, WHEN this occurs differs from child to child. The common age range for separation anxiety is from 8 months to 2 ½ years. Eventually your little one will be able to understand that you'll come back, and that will be the comfort that carries them through during separation. But what do you do in the mean time? How do you handle the in-between that can be months long?

As you drop off your kiddo to daycare, church, or with a sitter, as a parent we know we should just say our goodbye, give a kiss, then turn around and leave. However, those cries we hear at departure time are ones that completely tear at our heart-strings. God gave us our child to keep them safe, so when we hear scared cries that accompany good-byes, we automatically want to run back to take the tears away. So, even though separation anxiety is a normal part of preschool development, it can be quite unsettling.

God clearly knows well that each of us will deal with anxiety in some form. There are 66 books of the Bible and in EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM there is some sort of reference for dealing with anxiety. As adults we have the ability to logically discern the potential reality of our worries. A child does not. They only know what exists presently in their mind.

Knowing our child is struggling with separation can feed into our own anxiety. Our child senses our anxiety, and that feeds their anxiety, which has the potential to cause a VISCIOUS cycle!

One of the best things we can do is deal with our own anxiousness over the separation.

Philippians 4:6 states: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Separation anxiety can be worsened by how we, as parents, deal with it. As you drop off your little one, cling to this verse from Philippians! Say it to yourself as you turn your back and walk away. Then present your request to God. Ask Him, God please help calm my baby. Help my child to realize that I will be back. Keep him/her safe while away from me.

How a kid handles the separation varies. The emotions of a kid dealing with separation anxiety can range from a timid look with a downcast face all the way to a wailing child who has death gripped themselves around your leg. No matter how your child is fleshing out the emotion of separation anxiety there is something that we can do to help.

Practical Steps

So as we REST in the fact that God is always present with our child and has a constant love for them, what can we DO as parents to help a child move past separation anxiety?

1. Develop a goody-bye ritual. Don't sneak away when you're child isn't looking. This actually leads to more anxiety. Give a kiss on the forehead, say, "I love you. Bye Bye sweetie."

2. Be consistent. Your child will become more comfortable with drop-off at daycare and/or church as you become consistent with your exit..

3 Leave with confidence. If you walk out of the room then turn back around and return to retrieve your child, you are reinforcing the thought that something is wrong. Give the teacher your cell phone number, and have them shoot you a quick text in five minutes to give you a status update.

4. Come up with a comfort object. Sometimes bringing along a special object from home helps a child transition better.

Separation anxiety is lessened when we, as the parent, exude confidence and calmness at drop-off. Leaving your child will actually help your child in the end, so fight the urge to feel guilty about leaving them. Your job as a parent is to help them become independent, and they can't do that while clinging to your leg!