How To Get Rid Of The Separation Anxiety Monster
A Tip List For Parents

- Go to your school’s Open House.
- While at Open House, make it a point to walk up to other parents, introduce yourself to them and help your child to make at least 2 new friends that night.
- If there isn’t an Open House before school starts, visit the school and tour it.
- Make arrangements to meet the teacher and see the room.
- Find out if there are any summer programs for kids and get enrolled. Find some children who will be in your child’s class and make a few Play Dates. If your child already has a friend they will look forward to school.
- Ask your child: “Do you have any questions about school?” Don’t ask loaded questions like: “Are you worried about school or leaving mommy?” Those only plant seeds of doubt.
- Always talk about school in a positive upbeat manner filled with excitement and enthusiasm.
- Share happy school experiences you had as a child.
- Shop for school clothes, supplies and a back pack together. Make it a fun adventure. Give your child a say in the matter and choices.
- Go to the library and read some back-to-school books that make school sound exciting or that deal with the topics of their possible fear or making friends.
- Put a calendar that’s just for school on the fridge. Let them choose a color marker that you’ll use just to put their school events on, such as fieldtrips etc. Let them X-out a “count down to school” activity on it.
- Allow them to choose and lay out their 1st day outfit.
- While at the grocery store allow them to pick out a special snack for their lunch box.
- Tape a family picture inside the lid of their lunch box. Include an “I love you” note in their lunch box or a sticker that they can put on their shirt. Do not put toys that they might lose, or might have to be taken away inside. It’s also not a good idea to put candy in a lunch box either. Children usually eat that 1st which spoils their lunch and gives them a sugar high, making them tired, hungry and cranky later; which makes them more prone to tears and anxiety.
- Decide on an “I love you” token that they can bring to school as a “school-home” connection. This can be a favorite scarf that mommy wears that you can loop through their jeans, it can be something of yours that they can slip into their pocket, reminding them to keep it hidden there and not to play with it. It should not be valuable. A pin that you made together that can easily be pinned on their shirt, something that can be attached to their backpack, a cloth bracelet, a pony tail scrunchy or special barrette; all of these are not distractions at school. Bringing a stuffed animal or blanket does not allow them to work at a table or participate in an activity. If it has to be taken away, more tears ensue and the vicious cycle begins again.
- Have a special good-bye routine. A high-five wave, secret words, butterfly kisses, a special hug. A phrase that you say like “See you later alligator, after while
Crocodile. Don’t be late. We have a date.” Where you say the bolded words and they say the next part.

- Write a note and put it in their pocket: “Kelli, Mommy will pick you up after school at 2:15 outside the classroom door.” Or “I will be waiting at the bus stop for you.” Read the note to them, tuck it their pocket and it will reassure them all day long.
- Always be prompt or early.
- Make sure your child gets at least 8-10 hours of sleep.
- Make sure mornings are not hectic or rushed and that you have time for a healthy breakfast.
- Arrive on time or early so that if there is a meltdown the teacher has time to help give your child the extra TLC you both need.
- Discuss what the good-bye break will be with your child before hand.
- Make a clean break and disengage the clinging. “We discussed this. Mommy is leaving.” Then follow through and LEAVE.
- Don’t give in.
- Smile. Be happy and positive. Stay calm. Don’t give mixed messages.
- After you go, your child WILL stop crying in a few minutes. You can always walk down the hallway and for your own peace of mind, return when children are in class and have a peek, but don’t let your child see you.
- After school, and for sure at the end of the week, check to see if your child is making friends and see how they are adjusting at school and if they are having fun. That way, if they tell you later that they are not and want to stay home because of it, or feigning illness, you know it’s not true.
- Don’t watch or listen to “scary stuff.”
- Make plans to do something with your child after school like go for a bike ride, walk, read a story. This lets them know you are coming back for them, and also gives them something to look forward to.
- The more you are prepared, the less likely your child is to have any anxiety at all. They model your mood. If you are happy and excited about this new milestone in their life, they will be too.