



### Tips for Making Daycare Drop Off Easier

Dropping off your child at a new daycare can be difficult, especially if it is their first time at a daycare. Sometimes it's even harder on the parents than it is on the child. The teachers at Nanaimo Innovation Academy will do their best to help your child settle in to this new environment. This may take some children a week and some children a month (or more). This adjustment period will need both the teacher and parents to work together to support the child, so that they feel comfortable and safe in this new routine.

Children thrive with routine. It is good to come up with your own routine for drop off....and stick to it. Here's an example:

1. In the morning, talk about what a great day they're going to have today at daycare.
2. Get ready and get into the car. Sing a fun of familiar song on the way to daycare (the teachers can teach you one that they sing). Tell a story or count how many trucks you see on the way to daycare.
3. When you park, have your child carry their bag or something small.
4. When you get to the door or drop off area, say hello to the teachers (teacher's will welcome your child).
5. Sign in at the check-in table and have a quick chat with the teacher.
6. Tell your child you love them and you can't wait to hear about all of the fun things they get up to when you come to pick them up. Remind them to have lots of fun with their friends and teachers.
7. Give them one last hug and kiss.
8. Say "Good bye, I'll pick you up after the afternoon snack" or after nap time or after lunch.
9. Leave .....(and even if you hear crying resist coming back for another hug or anything else). You got this! Once you say goodbye, please don't come back for one more hug or kiss. If crying brings you back, this will extend their crying period for your child. Make sure you get all the hugs in before you say goodbye.
10. You can hide out around the corner (out of sight) and wait for the crying to stop....or maybe it already has subsided and they are engaged in play. Typically, 10-15 minutes is average.
11. You can always call us in to check in and see how they have adjusted. We will call you if we can't settle them within 20-25 minutes.

There will always be days when this transition is harder than others, whether it be when your child first few days attending child care or just on a day they want to stay home with Mom or Dad.

Here are a few tips to ease the daycare drop off transition:

- Separation takes time. Believe it or not, a child crying when you leave is developmentally a good thing, as bad as it may make you feel. Crying shows that your child is bonded to you. Separation anxiety is a stage all children should go through, some more than once, and how you handle it will have an impact on coping skills later on in life. Developmentally, we worry if a child separates and will leave with anyone without some tears or apprehension.
- If your child is an infant, be sure to change and feed your baby before drop off so that you have some bonding time before separation is necessary. Feeding young infants often means they are drowsy upon arrival and will tolerate being handed to the arms of a new caregiver more easily.
- Stay positive and calm, even if YOU are apprehensive about leaving your child. Your child will feed off your emotions and if they senses that you are afraid or upset, they will be too.

- Talk positively about your child's day and your day on your ride to child care. For example, "You are going to be finger painting today with Teacher Katy, that will be SO much fun!" or "Mommy/Daddy will be saying goodbye and going to work, but I will be so excited to pick you up tonight and hear about your day".
- Enlist your child's most familiar teacher at the daycare to help you with the drop off transition by greeting your child by name and helping them get engaged in play before you leave.
- Use a transitional object, such as a stuffed toy, blanket or object from home to help the child with coping skills. This can even be an article of your clothing or something special that reminds the child of you. For older children, we ask they keep this in their cubby (and can bring it out at nap time...if they nap). For younger children we are more flexible with this.
- Always say goodbye! Some parents think that sneaking out after drop off will make the transition easier, but often there will be tears no matter what. If you do not say goodbye your child eventually will look around to find you have gone and may panic, making the separation process even harder.
- When you get to the 'saying goodbye' part of your routine, you must leave immediately after. Please don't go back for one last hug or kiss. The hugs and kisses should be done before you say goodbye. There must be a clear point that the child recognizes that you will be leaving. This must be consistent every day.
- You may hang out outside the door (out of your child's sight) for your own sense of comfort after saying goodbye, but do NOT re-enter the room if your child is crying or has not calmed down after you said your goodbye. To help a child learn to adjust to the separation and learn to be comforted by his child care providers you need to say goodbye and mean it.
- Do call to check on your child if they were still crying when you left. Often you will feel much better when the daycare provider tells you they only cried for 10 minutes and are now actively engaged in play. We can even send a picture of your child every once and a while (but please know that we have a strict 'no phones or screen time policy' so we may not always be able to do this for you).
- Remember it is okay for a child to cry, and typically most children become actively engaged with play, a meal or caregivers 10-15 minutes after a parent leaves.
- Lastly, make a BIG DEAL when you arrive to pick your child up at the end of the day. For the child who was having separation anxiety in the morning you can say, "See, Mommy/Daddy ALWAYS comes back to get you after saying goodbye!" and lavish them with hugs and kisses and praise for being a big boy/girl and playing with their friends while Mommy/Daddy was at work. Coincidentally, many parents are baffled that the crying child they left at the door that morning is now happily engaged in play and will sometimes now cry because they don't want to leave day care!

For ongoing separation anxiety:

- For children having ongoing difficulties with separation, you can make a photo book using a Dollar Store small photo album and pictures that illustrate what will happen during the child's day. Review this picture book with your child each morning at breakfast before leaving the house and then send it to child care with him. Photos might include a picture of the child waking up in the morning, getting dressed, eating breakfast with family, the car/bus ride to day care, child care teachers, activities at child care and the last photo should be a picture of you hugging your child when you pick them up to take them home.