

Parent Guide



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We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

SEND Support



Subject Guides



Pregnancy & Baby



Health & Wellbeing



Supporting Learning



What is this resource and how do I use it?

Leaving your baby in the care of others can sometimes be a really daunting concept, for both you and your little one. Let's take a closer look at how you can support your baby when they're experiencing separation anxiety.

What is the focus of this resource?

Separation Anxiety

Parenting

Social and Emotional Development

Further Ideas and Suggestions

If you're looking for more information and support on maternity leave, take a look here. We also offer blog posts on **childminders**, **nurseries** and supporting your baby if they experience **separation anxiety**.

Parents Blog



Parenting Wiki



Parenting Podcast



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Parents Hub

Activities to Support Separation Anxiety

What is separation anxiety?

Babies and young children can sometimes become upset when they're separated from their parents or carers or when they're introduced to new people. You might notice your baby is clingier than usual or that they cry when you leave the room – this is a completely normal aspect of their emotional development. That said, it can make leaving your baby really overwhelming, whether it's work-related or for a much-deserved break. These feelings are not uncommon – you're the centre of each other's world and separation can naturally feel quite daunting. No two babies are the same – some take the transition in their stride while others find it more difficult.

What are the signs of separation anxiety?

Your baby might display their anxiety in a number of different ways but some common signs include:

- crying when you leave a room;
- crying when they're in the care of someone else;
- waking up early;
- trouble sleeping;
- not wanting to play on their own.

These behaviours can be really overwhelming for you both but it's important to remember that you're not alone and there are some things you can consider to make the transition a little bit easier.

Activities to Support Separation Anxiety

Practise shorter separations.

To try and minimise the shock of longer separations, you could try playing peek-a-boo with your baby to reinforce the idea that you'll always come back. You could also do this with their favourite teddy or toy.

In preparation for your baby starting half or full days in childcare, you may consider leaving them for shorter periods of time. Leave your baby with someone they're familiar and comfortable with while you go for a walk or to the local shop. From here, you can increase the time you're apart and eventually introduce less familiar environments.

Implement positive separation routines.

It can be tempting to try and sneak away while your baby isn't looking in the hopes that they won't be as upset but the shock of realising you've gone can sometimes cause your baby to become more distressed. Instead, consider creating and embedding a routine to soothe your baby at times of transition. You could try singing a song, cuddling your baby and confidently waving goodbye. Although you may be feeling anxious, try to prevent your baby from picking up on your worries by showing them that goodbyes can be a positive and happy experience.

Share comforting items.

Your baby will likely find comfort in something they associate with you, such as a T-shirt, scarf or teddy with your scent. These items can naturally reassure your baby and reduce stress as they feel close to you.

Use imaginative play.

Use soft toys, teddies or dolls to demonstrate a mummy or daddy who leaves their child but always comes back. If you have a toddler, you can also encourage them to take on the role of the parent, tending to an upset little one who is missing their parent.

How can I manage the guilt I'm feeling?

We know this is much easier said than done but try to remember that, although being apart can be difficult for you both, your baby is safe, loved and developing independence. Your baby will soon understand that you always come back and your time apart can help to promote a really healthy relationship.

If your baby is attending a nursery or childminders, they'll soon become familiar with their new environment, the people caring for them and all of the toys and activities they can explore. It can take time for them to build these relationships and engage their curiosity but you can rest assured that you and your baby will be ok.

