

Hamilton Community Pre-School

"Where discoveries, learning and fun connect"



Information Sheets for Parents:

Separation Anxiety

National Quality Standard – Quality Area 5

Element 5.1.1 – Relationships between educators and children. Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

Starting Pre-School can be a little overwhelming and stressful for both parents and children alike. As a result, it is common for some children to experience varying degrees of separation anxiety where they can exhibit a number of distressing behaviours from crying to anger and frustration.

Educators at Hamilton Community Pre-School are sensitive to this and are there to help you and your child. If you require advice or assistance in dealing with this, please do not hesitate to ask. The Pre-school also has available a booklet called "Settling into Pre-School" which provides strategies on helping your child separate.

Briefly, it is most important that you do not sneak away even though it may save a scene. This causes insecurity in your child and will ultimately prolong the anxiety. If your child is not settling, educators will contact you to discuss options, this could be collecting your child early etc.

WHEN CHILDREN START PRESCHOOL

Here are some tips and strategies to help you and your child in the early days and weeks of starting preschool.

Start gradually

We invite parents to stay for a while during the day in the early days. Speak with educators and work out a plan that works for you, your child and the preschool.

It's a good idea to tell your child how long you're staying, so they don't get a surprise when you leave.

Have a routine for preschool mornings

[Routines](#) can help your child feel safe and secure, particularly when new things are happening. You could set up a routine for preschool mornings – for example, get up, have breakfast, clean teeth, get dressed, put on sunscreen, pack lunchbox and go. You could even make a chart with pictures showing the different steps in your routine.

Have a goodbye routine

Say goodbye to your child so that they know you're going and tell them that you'll pick them up at the end of the day. You could choose a special place to say goodbye, or an activity to do before you go. For example, 'If you wave to me from that window, I'll be able to see you', or 'Which book will we read before I go?'

Make sure your child is paying attention when you say goodbye, then say goodbye once and leave. A lot of goodbyes can be stressful for both you and your child.

Be brave—if you are hesitant about leaving your child, they will pick up on your apprehension.

Communicate with the preschool teachers

Children get confidence from seeing warm, positive and friendly interactions between important people in their lives, like their parents and teachers.

Good communication with your child's teacher also helps you share relevant information so the teacher knows how best to respond to your child.

Celebrate your child's achievements

Joining a new group, meeting new people, being in a new environment and learning new ways of doing things are big achievements for your child. You can build your child's confidence by celebrating them.

For example, [praise your child](#) when they meet new people or try something new. Or you could encourage your child to call a family member to share what they've achieved at preschool.

Have back-up collection plans

Preschool finishes at a specific time so if you tell your child you'll be there at a specific time, it's important that you're there. It's best advised you do not leave your child to be the last to be picked up.

Here are some good books for children about starting preschool:

- *First day* by Margaret Wild
- *I love you all day long* by Francesca Rusackas
- *In my heart* by Mackenzie Porter
- *Tom goes to kindergarten* by Margaret Wild
- *What to expect at preschool* by Heidi Murkoff
- *Victoria Bubbles and the great preschool adventure* by Lizzie Dingle.
- *The Invisible string* by Patrice Karst
- *See you soon* by Dilraz Kunnumal
- *You go away* by Dorothy Corey
- *Kissing hand* by Audrey Penn

Most children settle quickly and learn that it is a safe and fun environment. You are welcome and encouraged to phone the centre if you are concerned upon leaving. The most important part about Pre-School is to enjoy the experience so please do not hesitate to speak with educators if you are experiencing any difficulty.

Useful Website:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/preschool/starting-preschool>