



# tips for leaving children with **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

My youngest child hated it when I left her anywhere. It didn't matter where it was, she would scream and cry at the top of her lungs, pitching a fit for to make sure that I (and everyone in the zip code) knew she was being left against her will. I was mortified! Over time, the fits got better when we put these tips into practice.

**1. Explain Where You Are Going Before You Get There.**

Before I dropped her off anywhere, I learned to always remind my daughter of where we were going and who would be there to watch her. I would say things like, "We are going to Sunday School. Remember Mrs. Mary is your teacher. She will sing songs with you and tell you Bible stories." The consistency of this little talk seemed to help ease her fears.

**2. Do Not Go Back and Get Your Child to Stop the Fit.**

Let's face it, typically the show is for mom only. My daughter's teachers would tell me that she would stop crying a few minutes after I left. Most children are this way - the crying is to see if you will come back and give them their way. Your child is smart. If you go back once, he/she will pitch a fit again (often with greater resolve) the next time you try to leave them because it worked the first time. Trust that the teacher/worker will come and get you if something is seriously wrong and your child needs attention.

**3. Talk to the Teacher.**

It is always a good idea to explain to your child's teacher that he/she struggles with separation issues. This lets the teacher know that there might be tears and such at drop off and helps prepare them to deal with it. Most times, teachers who were alerted to the issue would work to distract my child from noticing me leaving. They don't want your child pitching a fit anymore than you do, so most are eager to help.

**4. Pray for Wisdom.**

God is truly the only One who can give you wisdom on helping your child through separation issues. Each child is different, even within the same family, so be sure to pray for specifics on how to make times of separation easier on your child.

**5. Be On The Same Page As Your Spouse.**

My husband and I frequently discussed the best course of action for our child, and we both stayed within the boundaries we had set for her. Unfortunately, I have seen many couples who have not done this and one parent will always give in to the screaming child. Not only does this not solve the problem, it sends mixed messages to the child. Sit down as a couple and decide what to do. Then be sure and back up your spouse when the plan is being followed.

