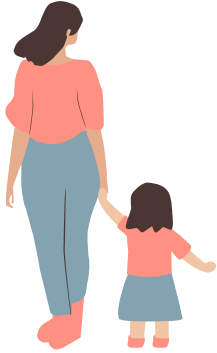


Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) Tips For Parents and Caregivers



SD44 District SEL/MH Team Jan 2025



Separation anxiety is a common stage experienced by many infants and toddlers. However, if symptoms continue for school-aged children for more than four weeks, it's advisable to consult your healthcare provider to eliminate any underlying physical issues. A diagnosis of Separation Anxiety Disorder (S.A.D.) may be considered.

What is S.A.D?

- Excessive worrying about being away from family members even in the home or at bedtime.
- A fear of leaving the home or being lost from their family.
- A fear that something bad will happen to a family member if they are not with them.
- Physical symptoms: stomach ache, headache, nausea.

Suggestions for Support

- Encourage short "away times" with trusted individuals, such as playdates or visits to Grandma's house.
- Avoid surprising your child; instead, work together to create a plan and follow it consistently.

Creating a plan

- This will be a step-by-step plan for the activity or day to help prepare your child.
- Talk about how your child will be safe at this activity.
- Read this plan with your child often.

At drop off have a **quick good-bye**, but don't skip good-bye. This is not the time to have long chats about their worries. Keep the promises you make to your child about when you will pick them up.

If your child is struggling to go to preschool....

- Wake up the same time. Connect and snuggle with your child.
- Do the same morning routine each day.
- Discover what is best for your child - Will you arrive early or right on time to where you are going? Will you go to the playground and meet a friend or go straight to the activity?



Acknowledge your child's fears no matter how unrealistic they seem.

- *Don't say*, "You don't need to be scared."
Do Say - "I can see you're scared."
- Validating feelings helps children feel calm.

Joining in your child's anxiety does not help them. Be calm, positive and believe in them.

