



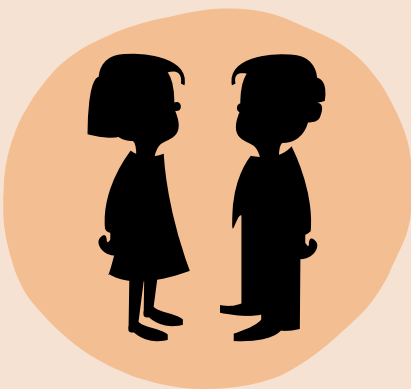
DOES YOUR CHILD STRUGGLE WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY?

Here is what you need to know

FACING SEPARATION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPACTFUL OF ALL HUMAN EXPERIENCES.

- DR. DEBORAH MACNAMARA

Young children, particularly those under the age of 3, crave connection and closeness as a fundamental need. This desire for attachment, defined by Dr. Gordon Neufeld as the pursuit and preservation of proximity, is crucial for their survival and well-being. Dependent on their attachment figures for care, it's developmentally appropriate for young children to experience fear and express protest when faced with separation.



DR. GORDON NEUFELD SAYS THAT JUST AS A TREE CANNOT BE TOO ROOTED TO THE EARTH, A CHILD CANNOT BE TOO ATTACHED TO THEIR PARENTS.

What can you do to help your child?

MATCHMAKING

Introducing new figures of attachment is a delicate process best facilitated through established connections. Children rely on a sense of trust in their caregivers for their well-being. Hence, cultivating a positive relationship between your child and their care provider is paramount. Begin by allowing your child to witness positive interactions between you and the care provider. Additionally, fostering attachment can be encouraged by highlighting similarities between them, aiding in the establishment of a meaningful connection.

BRIDGE THE SEPARATION

When separated, it's crucial for your child to have a tangible connection to you. Consider providing items like a picture of you or a comforting lovey that can be 'loaded' with hugs and kisses for moments when your child misses you. Any object can serve as a bridge as long as your child associates it with you.

In their first year of life, children attach through senses. Encourage this connection by having your scent on their lovey or comforter or using your child's cot sheets for daycare, imbuing them with the familiar smell of you.

Additionally, focus on nurturing the next connection by engaging your child in conversation about exciting activities you'll share once reunited. Whether it's reading their favorite book or cooking together, anticipation can be a powerful tool in reinforcing the bond between you and your child.

DEEPEN YOUR ATTACHMENT

A profound and robust attachment serves as a powerful bridge, overcoming the physical distance when you and your child are apart. It's through the experience of deep dependence that children cultivate the foundation for independence later in life. Research on attachment emphasises how the expression of delight, enjoyment, and warmth plays a pivotal role in building strong relationships.

Embrace the opportunity to hold, kiss, touch, and love your child without hesitation. This stage of their life is fleeting, and they grow up all too quickly. Cherishing these moments contributes to the resilience and security that will shape their future independence.

PLEASE NOTE DAYTIME SEPARATION MAY IMPACT NIGHTTIME SLEEP, OFTEN RESULTING IN BEDTIME BATTLES AND NIGHT WAKENING.

SOURCE

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