

Games to Help with Good-byes

Peek-a-boo

This simple game supports the theme of going away and coming back. There are many variations to the game: You can hide behind your hand, a towel, a blanket, a door, or a tree. Children will play this game endlessly. You will probably tire of the game before they do. There are many toys that support the theme of going away and coming back. For example: pop-up pals, Jack-in-the-box, and pound-a-ball.

Hide and seek

This is a more sophisticated version of peek-a-boo. You or the children hide and then you find each other. A variation on this game is hiding objects for children to find. For example: hide things in play dough, coffee cans, or sand and water and then let the children find them.

Playing out the theme of going away and coming back

Children love to pretend to go to work, to the store, or to grandma and grandpa's house. As they are playing these games, you can join in. They will want to do the leaving as you patiently wait for them to return. This play theme of leaving is often seen throughout children's play. They will incorporate it into block building, doll play, and even in the park and on the playground.

Let children use painting, drawing, and telling stories to express their feelings

Artwork and storytelling are excellent ways for children to express their feelings. Let children draw and then tell you stories about their pictures. You can suggest a theme. For example: Suggest they draw pictures about how they feel while at school. Even children who cannot draw representationally can express their feelings with art materials.

Incorporate books and videos that reflect themes of separation, starting school, and saying good-bye

There are many books and videos that deal with separation and starting school. It's a good idea to have these books available at all times and not just when a child is facing these particular issues. The theme of separation and saying good-bye is popular in many children's stories. You can point this out while reading the story and can discuss it with your child. Making your own books or videos with your child is always a wonderful, lasting, and meaningful project.

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