



All kinds of new experiences will be happening for you and your child! Often when children are starting school, they need time to adapt. Some children will adapt easily and others will need more time. Others will be in between.

You might have a very tired child after the first few days or weeks of school. For your child, there is a steep learning curve of routines, rules, new friendships and so on. Children are working hard to be cooperative, friendly and in control. When they arrive home, you might see fatigue, tears, and tantrums or melt downs. All of these behaviours are communication, and in most cases are related to being tired and feeling safe to release their emotions with parents. School can be hard work.

It is important for parents to recognise that these behaviours will likely occur, and talk about it with your child before they happen. Make a plan with your child.

- ✓ Be proactive. Discuss with your child ideas for quiet play (e.g. Lego, colouring, cars, etc.) near you or another nurturing adult. Children benefit from being taught “how to” calm and self-regulate.
- ✓ Adult-directed calm. Plan for low stress unstructured play after school — preferably outside with a healthy snack.
- ✓ Honour sleep. Keep bedtimes structured. Children this age need 10-12 hours of sleep.

Anxious Behaviours? You might also notice that it is hard for your child to leave or separate from you in the morning... or maybe it is hard for you. 😊 Both are normal. *Anticipatory Anxiety* is the anxiety that we experience in anticipation of unknown situations. It is often a mix of excitement and fear.

Learning to feel confident with anticipatory angst can help to reduce separation anxiety. Ideally, we want to help children feel capable, and confident. The video link below has very good strategies for parents and guardians: "*Helping Your Kindergartener with Separation Anxiety*".

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_5eiYlo1XM

General ideas to reduce angst:

Visit the school playground before school starts, and attend all pre-kindergarten events.

Tell personal stories of positive coping (showing empathy for fears but reinforce capability to manage).

Create a linking object - something to remind them that you are thinking of them.

Create a routine of a hug/kiss and goodbye. Avoid dragging out the process.

As the adult, it is important you convey confidence in the child's ability to manage.

If your child has anxious behaviours that persist beyond September, please communicate with the classroom teacher.

Wishing you all a wonderful year!

- The Elementary Counselling Team