

Great Goodbyes, Smooth Reunions

Saying goodbye in the morning and even reuniting at the end of the day can be stressful for both you and your child.

Here are some ideas that may help.

- **Set morning routines-** to help make getting ready a calmer experience, review morning routines with your child the night before. During the first few days of school, try taking photos of routines as they happen. Display the photos in chronological orders on the refrigerator so that, in the future, your child can easily use them to check his or her progress.
- **Send a family photo-** Help your child choose a favorite photo of your family to take to school. When he or she misses you, your child can say hello to your pictures.
- **Say goodbyes clearly-**Never sneak away. It might seem more difficult at first, but making sure your child knows you are leaving builds trust. Children often feel betrayed if you sneak away, even when they don't seem to notice at the time. They need reassurance that you won't disappear when their backs are turned.
- **Establish goodbye rituals-** your child will find comfort in personal rituals you create together. A kiss, a hug, a wave at the window, special words you exchange- whatever you do to say goodbye, make it a regular occurrence your child can count on.

For Smoother reunions.....

- **Take time to unwind-** It's more difficult to be responsive to your child's needs if you are still racing from your work day. Before you greet your child, take a few moments for yourself to catch your breath and switchgears.
- **Show an interest/ask specific questions-** Make time each day to talk one-on-one with your child. Asking specific questions about his or her day, such as "Did you play with Jimmy today?" or "what did you have for lunch?" will prompt a much more involved reply than, "What did you do today?"
- **Do something together when you get home-** Even when you are busy, sharing the most routine jobs with your child, such as setting the table, walking to the mailbox, or feeding the cat, can help you reunite more smoothly.