

Separation Anxiety
COVID-19 Return to School
By KidzCommunity

I would recommend any of the following

- The Kissing Hand – Audrey Penn
- The Invisible String – Patrice Karst
- Llama, Llama Misses Mama – Anna Dewdney
- Bye-Bye Time – Elizabeth Verdick
- Owl Babies – Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson

If you are looking for information for a child who has developed separation anxiety since we have started social distancing we need to consider what the child knows and are the child's parents separating to go to work. Young children often worry that something is going to happen to their parents when they are not together and I am sure it is even more scary when we have a pandemic going on and they can't see grandma because it isn't safe and they can't play with the neighbors because it isn't safe and then mom and dad leave. Here is a list of suggestions to share with the parents:

Here are some tips for helping your kids with anxiety:

Be vigilant about limiting screen time. This will minimize the flood of messages your child receives daily. Sometimes it's helpful to avoid watching the news or checking social media for a week or two.

Try to look at your family's schedule for the week and review it on Sunday night. When changes occur, make sure everyone is informed and plans are in place ahead of time. Remember, kids respond well to routine. If there is a change for the week, notify them ahead of time. Put a picture of their teacher on Wednesday if they will be going to school on Wednesday and talk about it as it approaches.

Keep them busy. Include them in activities in the home and family and make sure they are interacting with others.

Make sure they are getting enough sleep. Worry can interfere with sleep which contributes to more worry. Try to stop the spiral of worry-can't sleep-more worry.

Make sure your family is eating a healthy diet without excess stimulants such as sugar and caffeine.

If you notice changes in your child's behaviors, such as they are more irritable, unable to relax, cry easily or have tummy aches, check to see what is going on. Spend some time talking about what you do when you are not with them, assure them that you are careful and safe, let them know that you think about them and miss them when you are not with them.