

Making a Smooth Transition Into a Family Home Daycare

You've explored your options, interviewed potential providers, selected the childcare situation you think is best for your son or daughter, and now the big day is approaching. But how can you make the transition to the new arrangement easier? When parents think about starting their child in a new child care situation, parents tend to focus on what the transition is like for their child, but equally as important, is the transition for the parents as well. Parents, too, experience pain at separation, and the younger the child, the more intense the pain. Leaving your child in someone else's care can be hard. You may worry about your child's behavior, whether or not the provider and the other children will like your child, and if the provider can understand and fulfill your child's needs. You may feel lonely, sad, or anxious at having to entrust your child to someone else. Rightfully so, parents feel protective of their children, and possibly even a little competitive with the people who help care for them. Some people may wonder whether child care is good or bad for kids, versus staying at home with mom or dad; but that's the wrong question. It implies an either-or situation and pits child care against parent care, and working moms or dads against stay-at-home moms or dads. Instead, think of child care as a support that can help your child begin to venture out into the world. Parents are always first and foremost in children's lives, but good child care can help you be the best parent you can be. At **[INSERT YOUR BUSINESS NAME HERE]** we understand and emphasize with your feelings of separation. The following are examples of some of the ways that we help parents through this initial period of adjustment.

- Encouraging parents to discuss their feelings.
- Validating your feelings as a universal human experience.
- Providing parents with information about the positive effects of a quality home daycare on children.
- By encouraging positive and productive communication between parent and provider.
- Providing parents with evidence, such as photographs, that their child is enjoying the activities, and his or her interactions with others throughout the day.
- If it was a difficult drop-off, we will often follow up with a phone call on your cell phone or at work with a happy update.
- We work in partnership with you and your child to make this initial period of adjustment go as smoothly as possible.

At **[INSERT YOUR BUSINESS NAME HERE]** we understand and emphasize with your child's feelings of separation anxiety that is common in the beginning. The following are examples of some of the ways that we help your child through this initial period of adjustment.

- By developing a strong and lasting bond with your child.
- By giving your child extra love and attention.
- Encouraging your child to discuss their feelings.
- By helping your child to play out themes of separation and reunion.
- Reassuring your child about his or her parent's return.
- By providing heart felt hugs when they need them.
- By providing a place where your child can feel safe and happy, and begin to build confidence and trust in his or her new environment.

A quality family home daycare is a fun and exciting place for children to experience and learn about their world. It can be a great place for kids to interact with peers and to learn valuable life lessons such as how to share, take turns, and follow rules. These early childhood programs offer many opportunities for children to explore new surroundings and meet new friends while developing skills to use throughout their lifetime. However, beginning a new child care situation does come with its fair share of emotions, and helping your child adjust to the new surroundings can prove to be a stressful time for both you and your child. For a child, entering a new child care environment filled with unfamiliar faces can cause both anxiety and anticipation. All children need time to adjust, and all children adjust differently. There is no set adjustment period; each child is

different. It may take a few hours, a few days, or a few weeks. During this time, is when good communication between parent and provider is most important. Building this bond with your childcare provider will also help to ease any anxiety that you may feel during this process. As a parent, you are the major influence toward a good experience that will set the stage for many happy days in the future.

You can help your child get used to the new arrangement by easing him or her into it. If possible, we encourage parents to limit their child's time at daycare to a half-day for the first day or two; increasing in duration gradually, or what ever is comfortable for you and your child. Perhaps the most important way to help your child deal with the transition into child care, however, is for you yourself to feel as comfortable as possible with the arrangement you've chosen. Children can pick up on their parents' nonverbal cues. If you feel guilty or worried about leaving your child at daycare, he or she will probably sense that. The more calm and assured you are about your choice of childcare, the more confident your child will be. Expect some transition time, especially at age 6 months or so, when children start to experience stranger anxiety and are more attached to you. Children may respond to separation in a variety of different ways. Some may be fearful of the new arrangement and clingy when you try to leave; others may be eager to go in the morning. In the evening, one child may be irritable and demanding, wanting to be waited on or carried, while another may resist you at pick-up time, as if to "punish" you for leaving them. Such behavior is normal, and will most likely fade in time. Prepare your child for their visits by talking positively about the home daycare, the other children in the home, and the childcare provider. Discuss with your child the fact that this is where he or she will be spending the day while you are at work. Frequently use the childcare provider's name and describe all the wonderful things that will fill your child's day.

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