

Why Does My Child Have a Hard Time Leaving School?

Director's Desk Edition

Avoiding the Limp Noddle

Ever wonder why children exhibit certain behaviors? We do to. Although it is not always easy to figure out what is going on inside their heads, we can usually develop several theories as to why children behave the way they do in certain environments and in certain situations. Although there might not be definite answers to apply to every child in every situation, there are always ways to turn behaviors around to the positive.

Is your child struggling when it comes to leaving school at the end of the day? Fear not! You're not alone and we can help. At the end of the day the last thing any parent or teacher wants is to have a power struggle with children. There are many possibilities for this behavior that come into play on any given day.



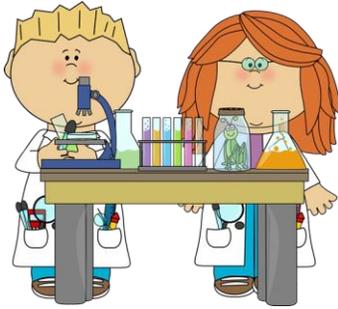
- Ignoring parents during pick up time may actually be a sign that the child has adjusted well and feels secure at school. They knew all along that their parent(s) would return: "I'm glad to see you, but it's no big deal. I knew you'd come back, and so I'll just continue with what I was doing."
- "Going to pieces" may be a natural reaction to the sight of the person the child is closest to – the parent! Sometimes it's hard for a child to be in a group all day, and by the end of the day they are tired and their resistance is low. You are a big deal, almost too big.
- Children are driven to experiment. Acting out can be a child's way of testing an interesting

situation. There are two people (the parent and the caregiver) who set limits and enforce the rules. "Who is in charge?" or, "How do these people work together?" Unable to articulate the question with words, the child may ask the question through behavior.

- The child may just want the parent to stay a while in this place that is special, to be there together. Children live an interesting and exciting day when they are fortunate enough to be in child care of high quality, and they want to share that experience with their parents and are not just being dawdly and difficult. Since the parents can't be there when the events actually occur, and since their reporting language is still too limited to allow them to give a full verbal report, this action re-cap is the best they can do.

Ordinarily, the great thing about having a toddler is watching them develop their sense of self. That, however, includes the discovery that she has a will of her own. And where there's a will, there's also a won't. The good news: Resistance is normal, it's your kid gaining confidence, learning independence, and figuring out who they are. The better news: There are tricks for guiding them to a more cooperative attitude.

Children are complex human beings. They are instinctive social scientists at every age, using their behavior to experiment with how the world of people works and trying to find their place in it. In the process, they will both delight us and push all of our buttons.



Here are some tips to make everyday reunions meaningful:

- Observe the child carefully and be sensitive to their needs. Everyone responds to "hellos" and "goodbyes" differently.
- Be the teacher's partner. Ask questions about how your child is transitioning during the day. Be receptive to the teacher's ideas for what you can do at home to help.
- Don't plan anything right after school. All children need downtime before the next activity.
- Once at home, prioritize. Nothing is more important than spending time with your child. The laundry, the telephone, and getting dinner started can wait.
- Gain insight through play. Preschoolers have a rich imagination. Tapping into that can give you insight into what's going on in his head.
- Promote routines at home. Consistency makes children feel secure; having security prepares them to handle the many transitions of the day.

Tactics to try in avoiding the struggle:

- Prep them so they are not put on the spot
- Sidestep the "no." Being matter-of-fact can be useful.
- Make it sound worth the trip.
- Warn, distract, have your way.

Of course, sometimes even your best efforts will still net a full Limp Noodle. But a little creativity and practice may spare you a steady diet of them.



What State Says About Pick Up

Communication between caregivers and parents is essential to both the safe and healthy operation of the center and to the parent's ability to assess the care their children are receiving. There are several things that need to be conveyed to parents at the end of the day.

- 746.307- You must notify the parent of less serious injuries when the parent picks the child up from the child-care center. Less serious injuries include, but are not limited to, minor cuts, scratches, and bites from other children requiring first aid treatment by employees.
- 746.707 Must I share a copy of the incident/Illness Report form with the child's parent? Yes. You must share a copy of the report with the child's parent and obtain the parent's signature on the report indicating the parent has reviewed it or received a copy of the report within 48 hours of when the incident occurred.
- 746.2431 Must I share a daily report with parents for each infant in my care? You must provide a daily written report to the child's parent when the child is picked up from the child-care center. The report must contain-
 - o Times the child slept

- o Times and amount of food consumed
 - o Times of diaper changes
 - o Child's general mood for the day
 - o A brief summary of the activities in which the child participated.
- 746.631 Must I have a system for signing children in and out of my care?
 - o Yes. You must have a system for tracking for each child coming and going from your child care center throughout the day. This tracking system must include the name of each child, the date, time of arrival and time of departure, and employee or parent's initials or other unique identification code.
 - o All caregivers must have access to the system to determine which children are in care during their work shift, changes in caregivers, and emergency evacuations.
 - o You must keep tracking information for the previous three months and make it available to Licensing for review upon request.

make the transition easier for the child, the parent and the teacher.

Once the parent arrives, take time to speak with each parent at the end of the day sharing the positive things that happened throughout the day. The kids are learning something new each day, let the parent know how excited we are about what their child achieved today. This allows the children time to say their good byes- to their friends, to their toys, and to their teachers- while other staff are gathering student belongings and lunches. And allows the Main teacher to share those all important facts that happened throughout the day. Assist the parents as needed in putting on jackets or getting things together.

If still having difficulty leaving, ask for the child's assistance in saying good bye to the fish to transition them from the room. Try a Good Bye Song- so that the kids can say ta-ta for now but I will be back to play with you tomorrow.

Our Policy

Each employee is responsible for greeting the parents upon arrival. Research has shown that children do better when parents and childcare providers are consistent. And the children's well-being is the most important part of childcare. Consistency and connection between the provider and parents are very important. The parents or guardians and the childcare provider should understand each other. They should do similar things with the child and have similar goals. Therefore it's important to have meaningful communication between parents and caregivers.

Most of our parents arrive around the same time each day so give the kids a warning to help prepare them for the transition to home. We often give transition warnings when prepping the kids to switch from play time to class time or from lunch time to nap time. It's the same concept. Prepare the child ahead of time to help

