

## CONNECT TO THE CLASSROOM

# Separation Anxiety

In this part of the module, you learned that separation anxiety typically emerges between seven and ten months of age. Many infants begin to clearly show that they recognize familiar caregivers and respond differently to new people. Sometimes they cry or cling when a familiar caregiver leaves. These responses vary in intensity and in their developmental timing: some babies show quite a bit of anxiety while other babies' reactions are very mild. Sometimes this behavior is demonstrated in toddlerhood rather than during infancy.

When responding to children's anxiety, it is best to provide comfort and reassurance, both physically and verbally. Do not ignore children who are crying, as this can leave them feeling emotionally abandoned.

**As you reflect on the following questions, think about times when children in your classroom show separation anxiety.**

**1** Think about what happens when the children in your classroom say good-bye to their family member in the mornings. How do you encourage families and children to establish a positive, reassuring good-bye routine?

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**2** How do you acknowledge and welcome each child to your classroom when he or she arrives? What new strategies could you try with children who have a hard time transitioning into your class in the mornings? What changes might you make?

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**3** Sometimes children may show more separation anxiety (or be more "clingy") when there is stress in their world, such as a new baby sibling, parents fighting or separating, moving to a new home, or surviving a trauma such as an accident or a flood. Has this happened for children you have cared for? How did you provide emotional support at those times? What other strategies might you try the next time this happens for a child in your care?

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