

Separation Anxiety Disorder

Besides seeking professional help, other helpful strategies to consider:

- If it is your student's first day in school, introduce yourself to the parent before getting down to your student's eye level to introduce yourself to him/her.
- Assure both the parent and the student that whilst it is normal to be anxious on the first day of school, most students start to get used to and enjoy school after a while.
- Instead of ask, gently but firmly request the parent to say goodbye to the student and remind the parent to state to the student the specific time and place where the parent will pick up the student after school.
- Hold the student's hand if necessary and lead him/her to his/her class assembly area. Introduce the student to the classmates that appear more confident and cheerful so that the student will not be left alone. Consider attaching the student to a suitable buddy.
- Inform all the student's teachers to look out for and encourage the student in class.
- In the first week of school, help the student to join in his/her classmates for meals and games during recess to increase his/her positive social experiences in school.
- If necessary, allow the student to call his/her parents during recess for the first 2 weeks of school. Nonetheless, once this rule has been set, avoid allowing the student to call his/her parent at other times.
- Unless the student is very sick, avoid getting the parent to bring the student home before school ends, as this may reinforce the student's behavior to report sick whenever he/she feels anxious about school.
- Consider implementing a reward chart ('Brave Chart') together with the parents for the student's school attendance for the first month.
- Praise the child for overcoming his/her anxiety.