Our Top 10 Tips for Tricky School Drop Off's

From Olive & Pip website

Firstly, sending lots of love and solidarity- tricky drop off's are the worst and it's so hard to see your children in distress, then having to leave them like that.

Here are a few things that have helped us along the way. Some children do find it harder than others so be kind to yourself ♥

1) Avoid rushing

Easier said than done, I KNOW! But this one really does help. Set your alarms to get up a bit earlier giving yourself more time to get ready and regulated, but also it gives them more time to wake up properly and adjust to the day before being flung out of the door (from experience!).

2) Help them if they need it

Placing less demands and expectations on children in the mornings can be really beneficial. Even if they can physically get themselves dressed it might just seem like too much for them especially if they are having a hard time going to school. Make allowances, offer them help and pick your battles. A calmer morning supports a calmer drop off at school.

3) Give choices

Help them to feel in control by giving them choices in the morning such as breakfast or which uniform to wear. This may help or may not, we actually found that for us making choices felt like an extra thing for them to "do" while they were tired, and they actually preferred quiet time with less to think about. But for other children I know this can work.

4) Be silly, have fun

At home and on the school run play games, tell jokes, do silly walks, spot cars, tell funny stories... anything to make them laugh and get those endorphins flowing (this also helps for you too!). This is also a great distraction if they are worried about saying goodbye for school.

5) Get moving

Getting the body moving on the way in can really help regulate emotions too if they can ride their bike, scoot or walk for a bit (ours love walking along walls etc).

6) Stay connected while you are apart

Saying goodbye is hard and it can feel harder if you know you are about to have the whole day away from each other. Use bridging strategies to hold each other close such as our Together Always Kiss Pins or Love Note Patches. Children feel "safe" when they have a connection to their attachment figure and these can also help with goodbye moments too if they become part of your routine.

7) Ask the teacher for support

Let their teacher know they have been struggling going in (if they haven't spotted it already) and see if they have any suggestions. Some things that have helped us are; the teacher asking them to do a special job on the way in, having a chat about their interests on the way in or what we have seen on the way to school, being allowed some quiet time when they get in before starting work. It helps children to have a friendly face to go to.

8) Time to connect

Reconnecting after school is really important, even if you don't collect them yourself. When you see your child again and at some point in the evening try to make time for some 1:1 connection even if its just 10 minutes to chat while they have a bath or play together without distractions. You can also talk about this special time in the mornings on the way to school and tell them you are looking forward to it.

9) The drop off moment

Ok this is the hard bit! Try a short, confident goodbye (I know this is hard when they cling to you, we have been there!). Tell them you know they will be safe and remind them who they can go to/what they can do if they need support. Here are a few other things you can try...

- Have your child bring something in to show the teacher or the class e.g a drawing or something they found on the way to school

- Do a silly or special handshake as part of your goodbye ritual

- Find a friend to walk in to school with

- Give each other a Kiss Pin

- Give their Love Note Patch a little kiss or a rub and tell them it's charged up with love, remind them its there for when they need it

- Use the teachers help for 'going in' strategies as above

Some of these ideas have been more successful than others for us but I have shared them all because all children are different, plus something that works one day might not work the next! Which brings me nicely to my last tip which is....

10) Mix it up

You might think you have found the perfect strategy to help your little one at drop off, happy days! Only to find it doesn't work another day. Thats why its great to have a few strategies in the bag and ready to go. It helps to naturally mix them up too, to keep things fresh and avoid the novelty wearing off.

Lastly, tricky drop off's are very normal and are usually because it's the moment they leave you (their safe person) and go into school where you are not going to be. For some children this gets better as they settle in to school, and others might struggle for longer but most children are fine once they are in school it's just the goodbye moment that is hard. Be kind to yourself. Remind yourself that unfortunately your little ones will experience things that are hard and as parents while you can't take that away from them you can still be there for them by validating their feelings and letting them know you love them no matter what ❤

If after a few weeks you think there is something else going on and they are struggling with drop offs because they are struggling with school you can do a bit more investigating by talking to them and the teachers. If your child is returning to school and has struggled previously, don't forget we have our Emotionally Based School Avoidance Toolkit which we created in collaboration with Be Happy Resources which includes loads of practical activities and strategies to work on with your child to support them with attending school if they find it hard.

https://oliveandpip.co.uk/blogs/top-tips/our-top-10-tips-for-tricky-drop-offs?srsltid=AfmBOooAk6wCPyev8OdFUwcFXuHyGFFqoA0cr3fYIodtxduwIrZRAWSB