



## For parents worried about separation anxiety...

Lil' Nature Kids is a drop-off program. We understand that for many young children, this can be the first experience of being dropped off with new people. While we as staff are very used to helping children who are having some separation anxiety, we also would like to pass along some tips for parents who are having their first experience of dropping off a child with new people! 😊

1. Prepare your child ahead of time that you will be leaving them. Help them think of things they might find in nature.
2. If needed, put a picture of the family or a special toy or "lovey" in the backpack. We just ask that it's not too heavy. Let us know it's there so we can pull it out if we need it!
3. If your child is having a hard time, make sure to get a teacher involved. We will try to engage them right away and will physically hold their hand as you walk away. We will help by telling your child what we are planning to do until we walk back to the picnic tables to meet the grown ups again.
4. Be matter of fact and relaxed, but honest. A child often mirrors what they experience from their parent. If the parent is nervous and giving the nervousness a lot of attention, the child will too.
5. Let your child know when you are leaving. (Avoid sneaking away unnoticed—a child can feel abandoned when they suddenly realize you've left.)
6. When the moment comes to say goodbye, give hugs & kisses, remind them of any special items they can hold if needed, hand them off to us, and then walk away. Your child may cry, but it often takes having a parent get out of site before we can begin to engage them in an activity. We will probably walk away from the meeting spot and start class and let nature be its engaging self! It usually takes about 10-15 minutes for most children to calm down and be curious about what we are doing.
7. If you're still concerned for your child, take a teacher's phone number and call after 15-20 minutes to see how they are doing. Also, be comforted knowing that in a situation where we know the child is inconsolable or we are worried, we will call you!