

EARLY CHILDHOOD FEARS

Most children have times when they are afraid of strangers and of being away from their parents. They may cry, scream, frown, cling to the parents or hide.

What causes these fears?

#1. Strangers



#2. Being away from parents



Fear of Strangers

Up to about 6 months, babies usually smile at and "go to" almost anyone. By about 7 months, many babies will show that they are afraid of strangers. Especially if the stranger gets too friendly – too fast.

Babies who are afraid will turn away and cling to mother. Grandparents and close friends may feel hurt if the baby is afraid of them.



Helping your baby get to know “new” people

- Give your baby time to get to know the stranger – your baby should set the pace.
- Have the person give the baby something to play with such as a toy or a set of keys. When the baby smiles and takes the toy, she is ready to make friends.
- Never make the baby go to the person.
- Stay where the baby can see you.

Helping your child feel comfortable in new places

- Tell the child about the new place and what she can do there.
- Stay with her for as long as she wants.
- Take your child on trips to the zoo, park, shopping or visiting.

Never get mad or tease your child for being afraid of new people or places.

Fear of being away from parents

Many young children are afraid of being away from their parents. Even if the parent leaves the room for a few minutes, the child may get upset. She may cry and scream.



Helping your child feel better when you are away

- Tell your child when you are leaving and when you will come back.
- When you are in another room, talk so that she can hear you.
- Take her with you if you are going to be away more than a few minutes.
- Do the same thing at bedtime every night. Sing or tell her stories and tuck her in before you leave the room.
- Let your child get to know the babysitter before leaving them alone together.
- Have the babysitter come before your child goes to bed.
- Take your child to visit the day-care centre before she is actually left there. Stay with her for awhile.
- Make sure your child has her favorite toy or blanket when she is with a sitter.
- Always say goodbye to your child before you leave. Never try to sneak out.
- If you feel guilty about leaving your child, try not to show it.

