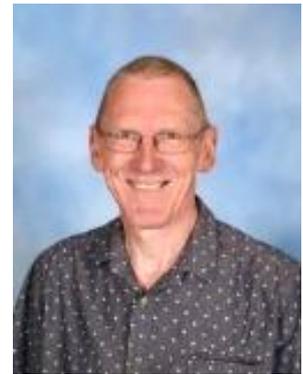
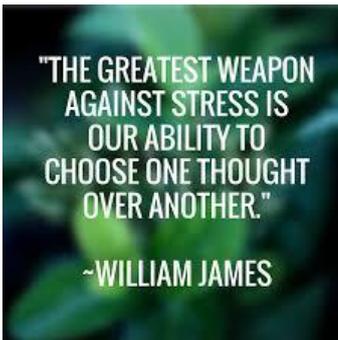


Chaplain's Spot



Separation Anxiety

It's natural for your young child to feel anxious when you say goodbye. Although it can be difficult, separation anxiety is a normal stage of development. With understanding and coping strategies, separation anxiety can be relieved, and should fade as they get older. However, if anxieties intensify or are persistent enough to get in the way of school or other activities, your child may require professional treatment. There is a lot that you as a parent can do to help ease your child's fears and make them feel safer.

For children with *normal* separation anxiety, there are steps you can take to make the process of separation anxiety easier.

Practice separation. Leave your child with a caregiver for brief periods at first. As your child gets used to separation, you can gradually leave them for longer.

Develop a quick "goodbye" ritual. Rituals are reassuring and can be as simple as a special wave through the window or a goodbye kiss. Keep things quick so you can:

Leave without fanfare. Tell your child you are leaving and that you will return, then go—don't stall or make it a bigger deal than it is.

Follow through on promises. For your child to develop the confidence that they can handle separation, it's important you return at the time you promised.

Keep familiar surroundings when possible and make new surroundings familiar. Have the sitter come to your house. When away, have them to bring a familiar object.

Have a consistent primary caregiver. If you hire a caregiver, try to keep them on the job long term to avoid inconsistency in your child's life.

Try not to give in. Reassure your child that they will be just fine—setting consistent limits will help your child's adjustment to separation.

Alan Silverwood – Chaplain [silverwood.alan.a@edumail.vic.gov.au]
Pastoral care for our community, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays.

The Chaplaincy program is funded through Federal Government & Community support including; "Inspire! School Chaplaincy Network", CCCVaT, Great Ryrie Primary School Council and local private and community donations.