

Conscious Discipline for School Drop-off

Transitions of all kinds can be challenging for children. Saying goodbye can be particularly hard!

The Conscious Discipline Brain State Model reminds us that emotional wellness and optimal learning are built on a foundation of safety and connection. Meeting the brain's basic need for safety and connection can make the morning drop off easier for children (and parents!) and sets the stage for a successful day at school.

AM I SAFE?



Your state regulates your child's state. Be conscious of your emotional state when you enter the classroom. Your child is looking to you for cues about how to respond. Many of these cues are unspoken. Regulating your internal state is the first step in helping children regulate theirs.

If you feel anxious about dropping off your child, take a deep breath (or two, or three) and focus on changing your internal state to calm. When you are able to remain calm, you nonverbally communicate to your child, "This is a safe place."

The brain is pattern-seeking. Predictable routines help the child feel safe. Maintaining a consistent routine and showing this routine in a visual form reinforces a sense of safety.

AM I LOVED?



Emotional connections form neural connections in the brain.

After we meet the child's need for safety, the next need is to be loved. Human connection is essential to learning, so our drop off routines include multiple opportunities to connect.

Connect with your child. Taking a few minutes to connect with your child before you leave has a lasting impact on his or her day. There is

no "wrong" way to do an I Love You Ritual; just be sure to include the connection-building components of eye contact, touch, presence and playfulness.

Help your child connect with the teacher. It is also important for your child to make a connection with the teacher each morning. As you prepare to leave the room, take your child directly to his teacher.

Connect while you're away. Before you leave, give your child a hug and kiss his "Bye Bye Bear." If your child needs a kiss from you during the day, the bear will have it ready to share. The "Bye Bye Bear" is a small stuffed animal each child keeps at the school. The parent gives the stuffy a kiss to "hold" for the child in case the child needs a bit of loving support during the day. This is just one example. Another great option is The Kissing Hand - this comes from a book I could share with you.



WHAT CAN I LEARN?

Meeting your child's needs for safety and connection prepares the brain for a day of learning and exploration. We're going to have a great day!