It's Hard to Say Goodbye

I really like exploring. But I'm not big enough to take care of myself. *I need grown-ups I know and trust to take care of me* and protect me. That's why I get upset when you leave me. I'm afraid you won't come back. Also, if you get too far away, I'm afraid something bad might happen to me.

What I Want You to Know

I tend to melt down when you leave me or when I can't find you because you are one of the people I have come to know and trust. We have a strong emotional bond that makes me feel safe.

It's common for kids like me to first experience separation anxiety when I am around 8 months old. My anxiety may peak around 14 months. Usually by the time I'm two, I'm getting used to being apart more often.

I know it is frustrating, but I need you to be patient and compassionate with me as I learn to feel safe, even when you are not around.

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Here's How You Can Help Me

There are ways to *prepare me when you will be leaving* me with someone else. Tell me who I will be with. Remind me when you'll be back. Create a special routine for our goodbyes and be willing to take some time. Talk about the fun things I'll be doing while you're gone. If I can keep my favorite stuffed animal or blanket with me, that makes me feel safe.

Please don't sneak out on me while I'm playing. *Be sure to say good-bye.* When you leave me without saying goodbye I feel abandoned and fearful, and I become untrusting of you. Don't get mad at me for missing you. I love being with you.

Goodbyes are hard and *I miss you a lot when we are not together.* But as I get older, I will learn that you'll always come back. Together we can work through my fear of being apart from you so that I feel safe when we're not together.