

Making goodbyes easier



Saying goodbye can be hard for all of us. Whatever the situation or the feelings involved, it can really help to consider how to manage these 'endings' that we face. The following tips have been written with a child in mind who is leaving a school, but could be equally useful for you or your colleagues in school.

Validate the child's feelings

1

Try to find some time to talk about how the child or children are feeling. This could be done in circle time or tutor/coaching sessions. There are no right or wrong feelings and it is likely that most children will have mixed emotions about saying goodbye and this is entirely understandable. Finding ways to help children to express themselves with a broad range of vocabulary is really useful.

Make time to reflect

2

Give the child or children opportunities to explore what school has been like for them. What have been the highs/lows? It's good for them to be able to articulate parts that haven't been easy as well as celebrating the more positive elements. If you want to record any of these thoughts, postcards are a good way of capturing highlights.

3

Identify strategies that help

Help the child or children to think of things that cheer them up or help them cope in a situation. Check out our '[What Keeps Us Going](#)' activity and adapt it for your class/group.

Recognise the support

4

Despite things changing, lots of elements of a child's life, including lots of their relationships will stay the same. Being able to identify all those people around them who support them can bring a real sense of being held to child. Check out our activity [Who supports me?](#)

Think ahead

5

As well as reflecting on the past and being able to consider how they are feeling in the moment, it is important to help children develop hope and a sense of excitement in the future. Finding positive things that they can look forward to will help to ground them and understand that their feeling about the present situation will change too.

Choose health

Know what affects your child.

What makes them grumpy, hyper, disconnected...



- Do they need snacks throughout the day?
- Do they need lots of sleep?
- Do they need to get out and about and do exercise?
- Do they need time alone?

Trust that you know your child and give them the basics that they need to cope with difficult days

Work together

Share ideas about how to:



- create action plans
- have a problem-solving approach
- enjoy achievements
- be forward-looking
- show them that we can all get things wrong

Be wise

As they discover new things, try to:



- be interested
- be non-judgemental
- guide
- give boundaries
- see it from all sides
- listen to their point of view
- choose your words carefully
- act on warning bells

Be calm

Try to stay calm whilst your child is feeling distressed.

Your child may show:



- highs and lows
- meltdowns
- anger
- blame
- self-centredness

Communicate

The small things you do make all the difference:

Keep talking, texting, listening, hearing, hugging, sympathising, smiling, reassuring, checking, sharing, suggesting, encouraging, respecting

Be the anchor

In times of change you are:

- constant
- family
- familiar
- routine
- in-jokers
- irritating
- comforting
- home



Have fun

Provide lots of light relief:

- be silly
- be embarrassing
- play games
- laugh together
- do stuff together
- make jokes
- make things
- be outside



Get learning

Be involved, find out more and talk about:

- social media
- internet benefits and dangers
- new music
- language and slang
- current affairs
- what it's like to be young in the current world



Move on up

Encourage independence:

- help them to move positively from child identity towards teen identity
- increase their responsibilities
- be positive whenever they act maturely

Be aware of your child's changing needs. Sometimes it might feel like one step forwards, two steps back.



Look after yourself

Support yourself, to best support your child:

- lean on friends
- offload on other family
- find 'me time'
- see the GP
- relax, exercise, sleep well, eat well
- remember tomorrow is a new day



Ten Ways for parents to help children cope with change

YM Parents
Helpline

0808 802 5544

youngminds.org.uk
Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

ASDA foundation

Trading as ASDA, ASDA, ASDA, ASDA

Find Your Young Minds Feet
sleeping up, moving up, growing up