



# Little Bee learning studio

## Separation Guide

**When entering our programs many toddlers will be separating from their primary caregiver for the first time! This is an exciting yet anxious time for both parents and children. In order to best help your toddler acclimate and adjust to separation we offer the following recommendations which are rooted in the best early childhood practices and are developmentally appropriate for our age groups.**

- Be confident! Toddlers are intuitive and will easily pick up on nervousness or anxiousness in their caregiver. If their caregiver is hesitant about the situation the toddler will be as well.
- Always say goodbye to your child and assure them you will be back. Use short, clear and age appropriate language when saying goodbye.
- Keep goodbyes brief and positive! Lingering or dragging out the goodbye builds anxiousness in toddlers and will make the overall process more difficult.
- Prepare prior to the start of the program by reading books and talking about separating for class. Be sure to include fun details about what your child will do in class and create excitement! Again, always reassure them you will return. Share photos of our teachers with your child and talk with them about the fun activities they will do with their teachers.
- Please do not stand in front of the window after saying goodbye. While we know you will be curious to see how your child is doing this can make separation worse for your child if they see you outside. Our teachers, who are experienced with separation, will send you a text update during the first half of class to let you know how your child is doing during the first few classes.
- Our teachers will notify any parent whose child is inconsolable. Our goal is for children to have a positive experience which will make separation easier over the first few weeks. If a child is unable to be distracted, comforted or calmed the caregiver will be notified to pick-up the child and try again at the next class. For some toddlers this process may take a few classes for them to feel comfortable. This is developmentally typical for toddlers and the transition with separation can vary greatly from child to child.
- Caregivers are not able to remain in class with their child. Having a caregiver in the classroom will confuse the child about separation and is also confusing for the other children in the class. This can prolong the entire transition and make it harder. As a drop-off class all caregivers must leave after drop-off but should remain close by in case they need to return to pick-up during the first few classes.
- Separating from caregivers is a big milestone in toddlerhood! Having a space of their own, peers to interact with and teachers to guide them gives children a new sense of autonomy. Fostering this autonomy helps your child develop their social-emotional skills and helps them to build self-confidence! Your toddler is learning to navigate new situations, peer interactions and develop new routines.

**\*Continue to page 2 for parent testimonials on their experience with separation at Little Bee!**

## Little Bee Parent Testimonials

"My son Lucas started at Little Bee right when he turned 2 yrs old and I was definitely a bit nervous about the transition. My oldest daughter was in full-time daycare at 4 months so I knew in my gut he would be ok but this was a bit of a different situation -- he was a pandemic toddler. He turned 1 right before we locked down so his world outside of our family was pretty non-existent. The 2-3 weeks leading up to his first day, we did our best to prepare him, telling him he was going to school, just like his big sister and we would always come pick him up. We told him about all the new friends he would make and fun things he would do with his teachers. I remember approaching the studio to drop him off for his first time and I could feel him tense up in my arms. But the second his teacher opened the door, gave him a smile (behind her mask) and reached out to help ease him into the studio, I could just tell he was in good hands. She was so warm and gentle and helped us reassure him that it was going to be ok. By his third day, he was running into the studio at drop off, barely taking time to wave goodbye to me. It's only been about 6 months for us so far but it's been so amazing to see how much he has grown since starting at Little Bee. It is truly such a wonderful place!"

-Regina, son age 2

"We signed our just over 2yr old twins up for the 2's program beginning in September of 2020, starting out just one day a week. I thought this would be a great transition to let them know it's ok to be dropped off for a little bit as my kids had never been to daycare or anywhere without me and especially in the middle of covid they really had not left our sides. Ms. Millie and Ms. Susanna both sent videos introducing themselves so we played those for them over and over and we talked a lot about school and what was going to happen. On the first day I dropped them off, they were hysterical...that's ok, the teachers told me let's get them in and see how they are. I went home and got a call about 45 min later .they had calmed down but were still a bit upset and so would I come get them and I did. I praised them on making it 45 min and said we would try again next week. Ms. Millie sent me an email and said each one should bring a blanket or teddy that they were close with and so the following week we did that, they did cry (and continued to cry for the next few weeks when I dropped them off) but they stayed for the whole class! My kids are now in class 2 days a week and they LOVE "school" and talk about all their friends, their teachers, the toys, singing and crafts. I could not be happier with our experience with Little Bee, I 100% believe it has helped my kids learn to speak and engage with other adults and kids."

- Kait, twins age 2

"In September of 2020, my husband and I made the decision to keep our little one home due to COVID and all its uncertainties, I was sad as this would have been her first time going to school and making friends. But in January of 2021 we decided that it was time for her to begin school. I looked at other options and ultimately decided to send her to Little Bee. My little one was home with me for the past 3 years and 3 month and I knew the transition to send her to school on her own would be hard for her (and me), I was nervous and scared as most moms feel. Not only were we starting during COVID times still, but she was starting in the middle of the year. The First couple of drop offs were hard, but every time I picked her up, she was so happy. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, drop off was easier and she was always coming out of the classroom smiling. Being that the class size is only 5 children with 2 teachers; the attention she was getting was comforting for me and I knew she would get the hugs and care she needed. The first few days the teachers even sent me a text message to reassure me that she was smiling, playing with her friends, and not crying which really made me feel so much better. We are so thankful for the teachers there who made the transition so seamless and easy."

- Juliana, daughter age 3