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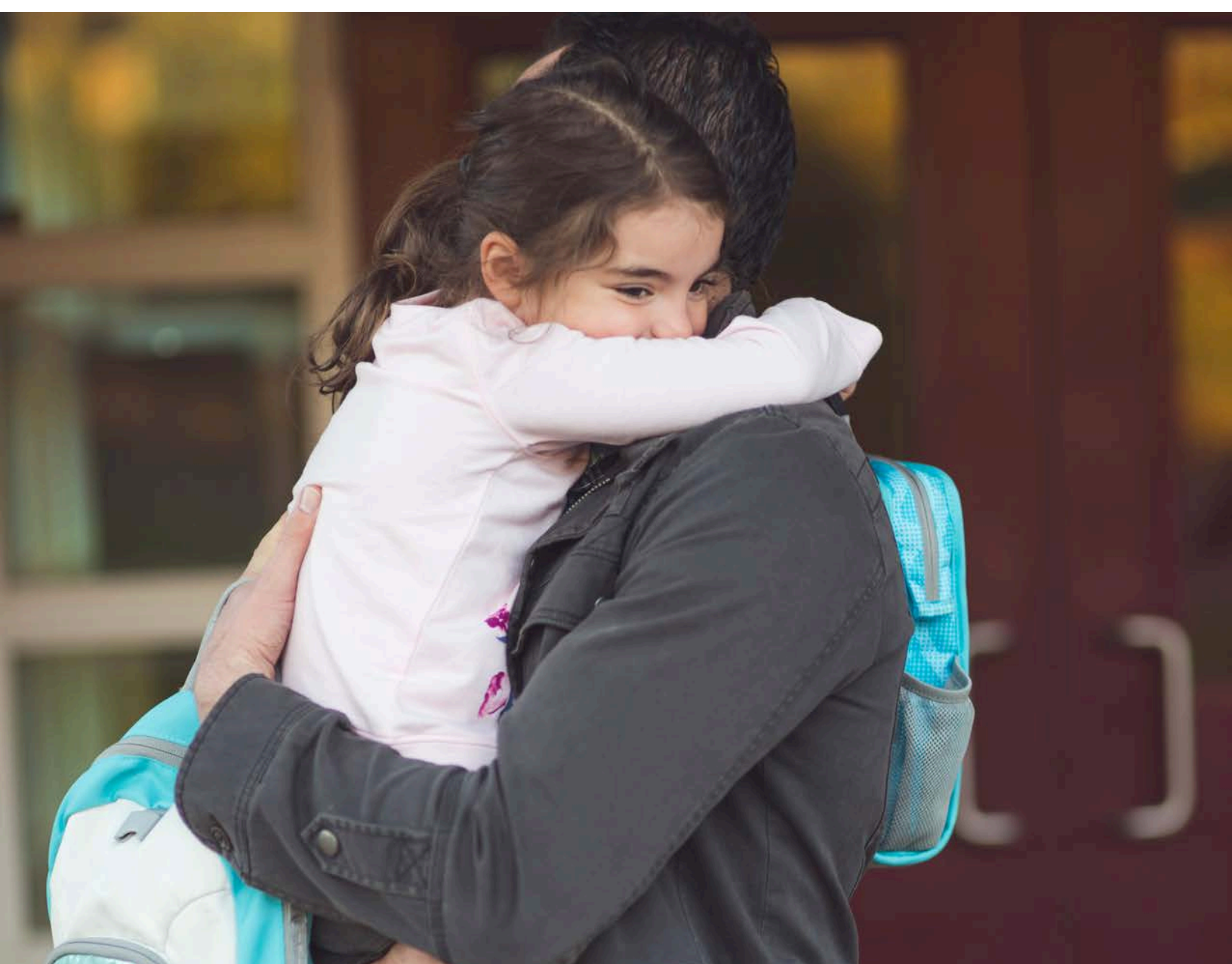
Drop-off & Pick-up Routines



The Importance of Morning Drop-off

Morning drop-off holds significant importance in the daily rhythm, serving as the initial point of contact between children, parents, and educators. For young children, establishing a consistent routine and structure is paramount, providing them with a predictable start to their day that fosters a sense of security and stability.

This routine not only promotes independence but also helps children develop essential life skills such as managing emotions, interacting with peers, and problem-solving in a supportive environment. However, it's crucial to recognize that morning drop-off can be a very emotional experience for both children and parents in this age group, and it's essential to acknowledge and support these feelings. Teachers play a vital role in this process, offering reassurance, comfort, and a nurturing environment that helps ease the transition for both children and parents.



Top 5 Tips for Teachers During Morning Drop-off

Tip #1: Arrive Early to Prepare the Classroom: By arriving early, you have the opportunity to set the tone for the day. Take the time to organize the classroom environment, ensuring that materials are ready and accessible. A well-prepared classroom creates a welcoming atmosphere that helps children feel comfortable and ready to engage. Additionally, arriving early allows you to greet each child and parent individually as they arrive, fostering a sense of connection and security from the moment they enter the classroom.

Tip #2: Be Warm and Engaging with Parents and Children: Your demeanor during morning drop-off sets the stage for the rest of the day. Greet parents and children with a smile and a friendly demeanor, making them feel valued and welcomed in the classroom. Maintain eye contact and engage in meaningful conversations with parents, demonstrating genuine interest and concern for their child's well-being. Keep cell phones away during drop-off to ensure that you are fully present and attentive to the needs of children and parents, promoting a positive and supportive environment for everyone.

Tip #3: Provide Resources and Guidance for Parents: Share resources and tips with parents before the first day of school to help them navigate morning drop-off successfully. Emphasize the importance of arriving on time and sticking to the drop-off routine, even if their child becomes upset. Encourage parents to provide warnings (and stick to the plan) before leaving (e.g. "five more minutes," or "one last book") and to reassure their child that they will return later in the day. **It's crucial to avoid encouraging parents to sneak out of the room when children aren't looking.** Sneaking out can erode trust between the child and the parent, leading to increased anxiety and insecurity for the child. It's important for children to understand that their parents will always say "goodbye" before leaving, helping them develop a sense of trust and predictability in their relationships and routines.



Tip #4: Empathize and Validate Children's Feelings: Acknowledge and validate children's emotions during morning drop-off, recognizing that it can be a challenging time for some children. Instead of dismissing their feelings with phrases like "you're okay," offer empathy and understanding, reassuring children that it's normal to feel sad or anxious when saying goodbye to their parents. Take the time to provide comfort and reassurance as needed, helping them feel supported and cared for during this transition. You may even have them help you with a "special job" if they're interested and willing, or engage them in an activity you know they enjoy, e.g. reading a book or coloring a picture together.

Tip #5: Practice Patience and Consistency: Morning drop-off is a significant transition for children that requires patience, consistency, and warmth. Be patient with children who may need extra time to adjust to the separation from their parents, offering comfort and support as they navigate their emotions. Maintain consistency in the drop-off routine, providing children with a sense of predictability and security. By offering patience and warmth, you create a nurturing environment where children feel safe and confident to transition into the classroom and begin their day on a positive note.



The Importance of Afternoon Pick-up

A consistent and smooth pick-up routine helps children understand the rhythm of their day, providing a predictable end that eases the shift from school to home. When pick-up routines are consistent and calm, children know what to expect, which can reduce anxiety and promote a sense of stability.

In addition to supporting children, the afternoon pick-up is a vital opportunity for teachers to connect with parents. It allows for brief but meaningful exchanges about the child's day, fostering a strong home-school partnership. Recognizing and addressing the emotional aspects of pick-up—like a child's excitement or reluctance to leave—helps build trust and reinforces the bond between children, parents, and teachers. A well-handled pick-up routine not only ends the day on a positive note but also sets the stage for a smooth transition to the next school day.



Top 5 Tips for Teachers for Afternoon Pick-up

Tip #1: Establish Clear Procedures Set clear and consistent procedures for end-of-day pick-up, including designated pick-up areas and sign-out processes. Communicate these procedures to parents at the beginning of the school year and ensure they are followed consistently to maintain order and safety during pick-up times.

Part of preparing for pick-up is encouraging teachers who may shift out before dismissal to share any important notes with the team before leaving. This ensures that the teaching team is informed and all on the same page, ready to answer questions or inform parents of any pertinent information at pick-up.

Tip #2: Communicate with Parents: Maintain open communication with parents regarding pick-up arrangements and any changes to the usual routine. Encourage parents to inform you of any alternative pick-up arrangements or individuals authorized to pick up their child. **Never release a child to someone who is not an authorized pick-up person.** Regular communication and following safety procedures helps ensure that pick-up transitions are smooth and that children are handed over to authorized individuals.

Tip #3: Create a "Goodbye" Routine Establish a goodbye routine that helps children prepare for the end of the day. This could include reviewing the day's activities, reading a book together, or engaging in a calming activity. A consistent goodbye routine helps to mentally and physically prepare children to transition from the classroom to home with greater ease. For preschoolers try to provide extra time at the end of day for children to engage in more self-help skills, e.g. getting their shoes and coats on, etc.



Tip #4: Support Parents With Transition Challenges It's important for teachers to be empathetic and understanding towards parents who may face challenges during the pick-up transition. Some children may resist leaving the classroom, resulting in delays and frustration for both parents and teachers. In such situations, teachers can play a supportive role by offering guidance and modeling effective strategies for parents to navigate the transition smoothly.

One way to support parents is by modeling language and communication techniques that can help diffuse resistance from children. Teachers can demonstrate phrases such as, "It's time to go home now. Let's put our shoes on together," or "I understand you're having fun, but it's time to say goodbye to your friends and head home - you'll get to see them again tomorrow!" By providing parents with these verbal cues, teachers empower them to confidently guide their children through the transition process.

Additionally, teachers can demonstrate how they will assist children if they continue to resist leaving. For example, if a child is ignoring their parent's instructions to put on their shoes, the teacher can step in and calmly intervene by saying, "It looks like you're having a hard time getting your shoes on. If you need help, I can assist you." This approach reinforces cooperation and respect while offering practical assistance to the child & parent.

Tip #5: Offer Brief (Positive) Daily Highlights

Provide parents with a quick summary or highlight of their child's day. This can be done verbally during pick-up or through a brief note or daily log. Sharing positive moments or significant achievements helps parents feel connected to their child's school experience and reinforces the home-school connection. **Remember, pick-up time is not the moment to mention concerns or share negative information about the child.** If there are any concerns or behavioral issues to discuss, these should always be addressed in a planned, private, in-person meeting. Both children and parents look forward to their reunion at the end of the day, and it's crucial to keep this moment positive and uplifting. This approach ensures that the end-of-day transition is a joyful and reassuring experience for children and their parents.





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