

Goodbye & Reassurance Scripts

Phrases to use in the moment

These scripts come directly from the strategies in your main guide. You don't need to memorise them word for word, use them as a starting point and find the version that sounds like you.

Validating Without Alarming

Instead of dismissing the feeling, try naming it while holding your confidence in them.

Instead of: "There's nothing to worry about, you'll have a lovely time, don't be silly."

Try: "I know you really don't want me to go. Saying goodbye feels really hard today."

Add confidence: "I know you don't want me to go, and I know you can do this."

"I know you're scared, and I know you're safe."

"I know you want me to stay, and I'm going to work."

"I know you miss me, and you can still have fun while you're missing me."

Giving the Goodbye a Predictable Shape

Try: "We're going to nursery. We'll hang up your coat and have one cuddle, then I'll say goodbye. You'll have a snack, play outside, have lunch, and then I'll come back after story time."

Notice this doesn't promise no tears - it tells them what happens next, which is what an anxious brain is really asking for.

Ending the "Elastic Band" Goodbye

Try: "I know, you really want another cuddle. We've done our goodbye cuddle, so now Mrs Jones is going to help you inside. I'll see you after story time."

Then go. This is the hardest one to say while your child is crying but a predictable goodbye, handed to a trusted adult, is different from an escalating one.

Breaking the Reassurance Cycle

Try: "You've already asked me that, and I think I've answered you. I think your worry is asking again because it wants to feel completely sure - I'm coming back after lunch, just like we planned."

Reconnecting

Try: "There you are. I said I'd come back after story time, and here I am."

Warm and present is enough - you don't need a big reunion every time.

Noticing Their Capacity (After the Fact)

Instead of: "See, you were fine."

Try: "You really didn't want me to leave, and you managed it."

Or: "Your tummy had that worried feeling when I went, and then after a while you started playing."

In the Regulation Moment

Try: "Your body looks like it's getting really worried. Should we do our wall pushes?"

Or: "Let's see if we can do our slow bubble breath."

Not: "You need to calm down before I can leave." Calmness isn't a requirement for separation - your child is allowed to still feel sad or worried afterwards.