Tips for helping your child with school drop off.

Before drop off

- **Prep your child**. Letting them know in advance what will happen can make a huge difference and help kids feel safe.

- **Use toys at home to act out what will happen**- how you say goodbye. If things have gotten difficult start afresh- let your child know that you know its been hard for them at drop off- and that you will be trying a new way from now on- then demonstrate with the dolls- have toys representing you and them drive/ walk to school together- then when you get to school the toy feels worried- which is normal- but mum/ dad say bye bye and give them a kiss/ cuddle and then they go and see mrs xyx or their friend xyz- and they have a lovely day and mum/ dad come and get them at pick up. Act it out.

- You can also **watch videos together** - Daniel tiger on Netflix has a good one or you could search on youtube.

Getting ready for school

- **Involve them in the process**- kids hate orders at them- try instead asking them -have you packed bag? and have a tick chart or something you can fold up each time its done and let them fold it/ tick.

- Have a **visual guide** of what needs to be done the day before and morning of- so its consistent.

- If they push back on any parts of getting ready– **try giving options.** Which socks will you wear? And give two options for them to choose from. Children love to have some control and choices (even when you have chosen both options so it's a win win for you!)

When dropping them off

- **Avoid dismissing feelings**- don't say 'you are okay' or 'its not scary' . Its something that feels helpful- but actually for children (and us adults) if they feel scared it's a real feeling and if they are told just not to feel that way it can make them feel more unsafe and unsure. Instead acknowledge their feelings- are you feeling nervous? How does that feel? Butterflies? Feel a bit sicky? I feel that way sometimes too. Then stop- and hold your boundary Right now its time for school- I will pick you up at 3.15pm. I cant wait to see you.

- **Have your goodbye be quick, calm and consistent.** It may feel harsh or mean to say goodbye and just leave- but it's the best thing you can do for your child. If you linger or stay and give lots of reassurance and cuddles- actually it makes them feel more unsafe. This signals to your child that something might be wrong and might make them panic.

- **Be a role model to them** and show them you are confident in the people you are leaving them with. Try to smile and laugh with a teacher/ other kids- this tells them they are safe.

Through the day

- **Offer a connection object.** This could be a bracelet, hair tie, or a small pebble- something you give them each morning and collect after school. Or you could draw a face/ heart on their hand and on your hand- so you can both kiss/ touch this through the day to show your love to each other. You could tell them that you kissed/ touched yours when you thought of them during your day.

- Or try putting a note in their lunchbox/ planner/ notebook – could just be a funny doodle/ message on a post it. This is something for them to look forward to through the day and it shows them you are thinking of them even when not with them.

Afterwards

- Focus on the positive – **praise them for when they do go in** – if they manage to go in but are late saying 'well done for going in, you missed morning but at least you went in the afternoon'- sounds okay but all your child might remember is that they missed some school and feel bad. Avoid giving praise with any buts to it- just pure praise.

- Even if it isn't exactly how you hoped- praise for trying/ going in eventually will make your child feel good and want to do more . **Noticing and praising the behaviour you want to see will increase this behaviour-** and works much better than punishment or criticism for behaviours you dont want to see.