

ST. BERNARDINE OF SIENA CHILDEN'S CENTER
"YOUR CHILD'S FIRST EXPERIENCE"

A child's first experience away from home can be overwhelming. Feelings of anticipation and excitement are mixed with fear and apprehension. By recalling their own first experience away from home, adults can help children to make the transition easier. It might start with talk at home about where your child will be going while you are at work.

The next step in orienting your child to our care will be a brief visit to the center accompanied by one or both parents. If possible, leave brother and sisters with a baby-sitter, as this day should belong to the child who is to be enrolled.

This is not the best time for conference. You may find a moment to slip into the Director's office for a brief time if you have special information to share, but we ask you not to discuss you child in his or her presence. This is a get-acquainted visit.

Your child may cry when you leave the first day, but often times, the tears will end as soon as the parent turns the corner. Try to relax. We will not let your child have a prolonged, unhappy experience. If it seems extra time and help in making the transitions are needed, we will call you to make a plan together.

When you leave, please go with a smile and a cheerful good-bye. Many parents keep going back for one more kiss-reassuring their child over and over, when in truth, they need the reassurance themselves. Uncertainty on your part can hinder your child's normal adjustment. Your child will easily pick up on the cues you are giving him/her. In all probability, your child will love the Center and will look forward to coming each day.

There is a common occurrence with young children, which can be less of a problem if parents are forewarned. Your child may be blissfully happy for the first few days, before announcing, seemingly out of the blue, "I am not going"! One reaction is to think something must have happened in the Center.

James Hynes, a respected author and educator, offers this explanation. The child has reached a major step in growing up. He wants to be "big", but leaving home every day has a note of finality; he is not quite ready to give up being "little".

The majority of our children do not face this difficulty. For the small group who do, we plan for gradual adjustment based on the needs of the child. Before you know it, the Center will be a "home-away-from-home", eagerly anticipated by your child and you.