

## Preparing Yourself for Child Care

This may be a difficult time for you as you entrust your child to a new child care provider. Knowing yourself and how you tend to react to change can be helpful during the transition, and make it easier on your child as well. Some things to think about:

- If possible, take a few half-days off from work to help your child to make a slow transition into care. For example, take your child in just for the morning and pick her up after lunch for several days. By day three, she can begin to stay for the afternoon. By the end of the week, she should be able to stay for a full day. Alternatively, you can take her in for full days of care all week, but come in to spend the afternoons together for part of the first week. Perhaps you could help put your child down for nap the first time or two.
- Try to drive the route you will be taking before care begins, to get a sense of the commute time from home to child care to work.
- Your child will probably pick up on any feelings of stress or tension you may have about this change, and may react to them. Try to remain calm and reassuring.
- On the way to child care, talk to your child about the teachers or provider you met when you visited; talk about the other children you met who attend your child's new program.
- If your child cries, try to acknowledge his feelings in a calm and positive way: "Yes, it's hard to say goodbye sometimes, but we will see each other again for dinner tonight, and you can tell me all about the children and the toys you play with today in preschool."
- Try not to "drag out" difficult goodbyes: once you hug goodbye, leave promptly and try not to show any upset you may feel. If you act confident that your child is in good hands in a safe place, she will sense your confidence and be reassured.