It can be hard to leave your child in the care of someone else especially if they cry or cling on to you when you go to leave. This does not mean that the child does not like the person or place that they are being left in it just means that they are having trouble separating from you. This is normal for children to feel like this as it is part of their emotional development and learning that they are a separate person from you. It can make you feel anxious because as parents/guardians we are wired to respond to our child’s cries and emotions. Remember that young children can’t put their emotions in words but they can cry and smile. Separation anxiety is normal between the ages of 8-14 mths

**Why should I leave my child with someone else?** It is important for your child to learn that they can be safe and have their needs meet by other safe person. As this helps them develop the idea of self.

As a parent it is important to look after ourselves mentally, physically, relationally and spiritually. Having someone else care for your child can give you the opportunity to do this. When parents/guardians have their needs meet they are best able to care for their child.

**Prepare your child for unforeseen circumstances**. What if there is suddenly a family crisis, or you end up in hospital? How will your child going to react if they suddenly have to be cared for by someone else and they have not done this before. It is good to plan ahead and help your child manage in difficult circumstances. When you are calm about this, the crisis will be less stressful.

Leaving your child at day care or a crèche can give them learning opportunities which are different to those that they experience at home. They may have opportunities to develop socially with other people and children. They will learn to transition between you and another significant person which will help them later on with transitions to kindy and school.

**How can I achieve this when my child is very anxious?**

* -Be present with your child when they visit a new person/environment for the first time.
* -Some children need many chances to be apart from you to learn that they are OK. Give them small amounts of time away from you and come back before they are distressed. Work with your carer in this process and have a plan so that everyone feels that they are making good progress.
* -Once you child has meet your carer and experienced the new environment a few times allow enough time for the carer to settle your child and build relationship with them before you come back. Your child needs time to build some attachment to your carer even if they are only looking after them for a few hours. This is how children feel safe.
* -Be as relaxed as you can. Children are very tuned in to their parents and they will feel that something is wrong if you are anxious about leaving them.
* -Talk to your child about what will happen and prepare them for being looked after by someone else. Tell them that you will come back. Once you have gone through the introduction process with your child and they know the new person/environment do not linger to long in saying good bye as this will make it harder for your child to let go. You may need to leave when your child is crying but they will often settle with in a few minutes of you leaving. You child is just saying that they love you and that it feels different when you are not there.