**How do I know when my child is ready for me to join them in the classroom or on fieldtrips?**

Starting school is a monumental transition for your child. They are experiencing a new social paradigm where they are taking the lead from their teachers and learning how to work out social dynamics and personal needs in a whole new “family”. The teacher provides a safe and secure environment just as you do at home where they can test boundaries, practice skills, grapple with difficulties and celebrate accomplishments. At home your child’s loyalty is with you, the parent. At school their loyalties are with the teacher.

For many younger children, having their parents in the classroom or on field trips can lead to anxiety and undue stress. Their loyalties are divided and they can become confused as to whom to go to for comfort or direction. Sometimes when parents are near, children do not want to follow the directions of other adults, which is completely normal. The teacher may be asking the class to follow a particular set of directions and if a child that doesn’t want to follow and their parent is present, they may go to their parent looking for other options putting all involved in an awkward situation. Until your child has transitioned out of this stage it is best to step back and allow them to attend field trips and days at school without you. This type of separation anxiety will pass when the child is developmentally ready and then parents can start joining them!

You will know they are ready to have you in the classroom when they are confident and secure to follow all the teachers’ prompts, be separate from you and be fully engaged with their peers and experiences without any unnecessary stress. A conversation with the teacher (Miss Malika) will help to ensure the best choice for your child if you are unsure.

"As someone who has worked for many years in education and is now a parent myself I know what it is like to be on both sides. I could not wait for the day to go on a field trip with my children. It took everything I had to hold myself back from chaperoning the last field trip. I knew that if I went my daughter, Krislyn, would not get the full experience she was supposed to get. When I am with her she clings to me and will not always follow the direction of other adults. It is hard for me to let go, but I know this is what is best for my daughter. She would have loved for me to be with her, but she had a blast and made her own memories without mommy and daddy." -Mariah Rohlapp