

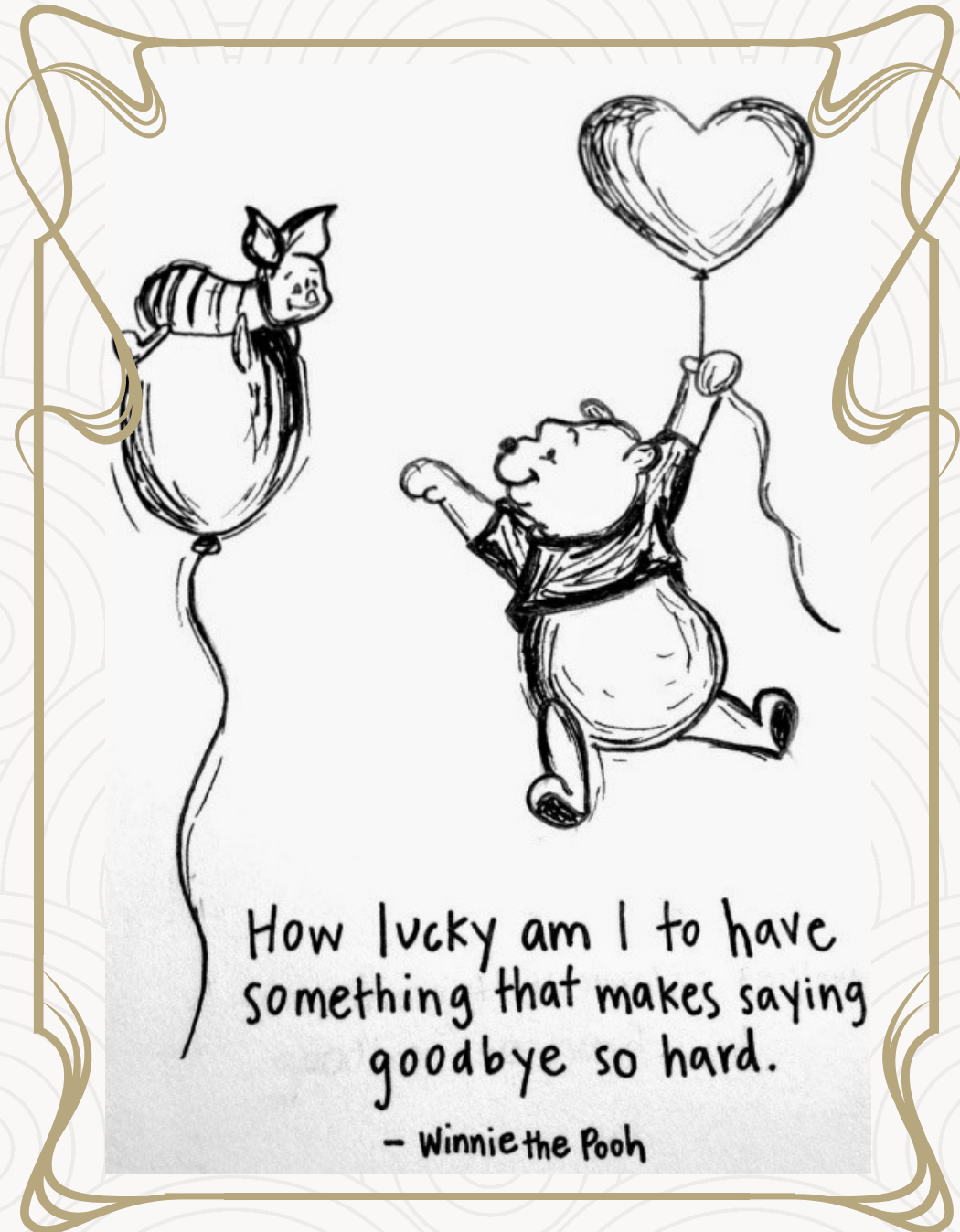


Farm Friends

→ Providing authentic learning experiences

# Our Guide To Supporting You & Your Child

## Settling in and Saying Goodbye



How lucky am I to have  
something that makes saying  
goodbye so hard.

- Winnie the Pooh

# Farm Friends Guide to Settling in and Saying Goodbye

The mornings can be a challenging time for the best of us, I'm sure we have all had our share of hustle and bustle mornings when nothing is going the way we want it to but that clock keeps ticking! As is life, sometimes these challenging mornings can enhance separation anxiety in children as well as anything from being a bit unwell or any changes at home.

In the eyes of a child saying goodbye for the next 6 hours can be as hard as it is for us to farewell a loved one at the airport for a long period of time. We know that this sadness is because we love them, we know that after we have had our teary goodbyes they will walk through the gate and slowly but surely life continues, we move forward. We are secure in our understanding of what is to come, knowing what to expect... but imagine how unsettling it would be if the rules changed each time! Never knowing if this goodbye would be the final one or if there was still more time.

While we understand that each family is different and there is no right or wrong way to say goodbye. Through our experience and professional knowledge we have put together some helpful tips for easing the anxiety that can come with drop off time.

# Steps to Farewell Success

## Set the Scene

Knowing what to expect is an essential part of preparing any child for a big change! Talking through with your child the plan for the next day will allow them to be able to process what is to come, giving them time to prepare and take comfort in knowing what to expect. Letting your child know how long you will stay for, something you could do together before saying goodbye as well as talking about when the day will be over for them (after lunch, after tidy up time etc) can ease the anxiety and give children a sense of control over this new experience.

## Following through

Separation anxiety can be heightened with too many goodbyes, relating back to knowing what to expect. While it is vital to **allow your child to see you leave and to say goodbye** (while sneaking out can be easier on the parent it is much more stressful and scary for the child to suddenly realize the one they trust has left) it is important to only say goodbye once, have one last hug or kiss and make a swift exit. This allows your child to know what to expect, feel their emotions and begin to explore all the exciting things they can do here.

## **Build a Ritual**

A ritual is a routine with heart, some children choose to wave from the same spot each day, some have a swing with Mum before goodbye or some children choose the same experience each morning (like painting or puzzles). Same same feeds a child's brain, giving them control and power through consistency and being able to predict what is coming next.

## **Buying In**

Children are incredibly in tune with picking up on our emotions, and we know that this can be a hard time for both parent and child alike with many conflicting emotions being felt on both sides. How you are feeling about this process will have a huge impact on how your child feels about us. Showing your child that you trust Farm Friends, that you believe that they will be safe and happy here will trickle down. As well as acknowledging their feelings are valid "It's hard to say goodbye I know, but I know you are going to have so much fun today I cant wait to hear about it after (lunch, tidy up time, afternoon tea)". Show your child that you believe that they can do it and soon they will believe it too. If you are ever feeling uncertain or need a chat we are happy to help! We believe that building relationships with a child's whanau is just as essential as our relationship with the child, and it is a settling process for you too!

## FAQ (Frequently asked Questions)

**Q:** *My child has a cuddly/blanket/dummy/toy can they bring this with them?*

**A:** Comfort items can create a real sense of security for a child who is unsure or feeling unsettled and we have no issue with them bringing these to the center during the settling in process. We just ask that you consider a few things. Is this item an appropriate size to be transported? Can my child comfortably look after this item and still have a spare hand to explore? Will this item be irrevocably damaged by sand water or mud? Is this item just for sleep or for the whole day?

**Q:** *What if my child won't settle?*

**A:** Being upset that their trusted adult is not here is normal, as is being periodically upset on and off throughout the day until they build a trusted relationship with us. However, if your child is unable to calm down and is becoming increasingly distressed we will call a parent to come and pick them up. Believing that this is a sign that they may need more settling visits or more time with their parent in the centre. Especially during the first few weeks, it is ideal to keep your phone close by in case your child needs to have some shorter days to begin.