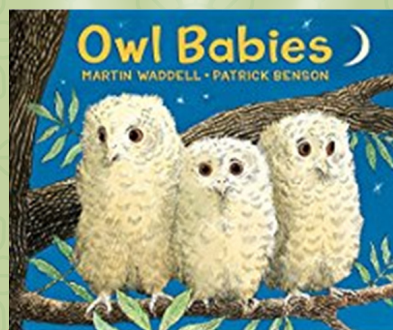


New York State

BOOK NOOKS



Owl Babies

Three owls wake up to find that their mother is not home with them. The owls talk each other through their fears of where their mother might be and if she will return. When their mother comes back, she reminds them that she told them she was going to go away for a short while and then return, which is what she did, to her baby owls' great relief. This book portrays how infants and toddlers experience separation anxiety and provides them with a concrete example of how loved ones can leave and then return, which may help them with separation anxiety.

Title: Owl Babies

Author: Martin Waddell

Illustrator: Patrick Benson

Publisher: Candlewick Press

Date published: 2012

Social and emotional skills infants and toddlers can learn through this book:

Infants and toddlers will be able to examine how loved ones leave and return.

Social and emotional words this book can emphasize:

live, think, wait, worry, come back, nervous, be back soon, excited.

Activities to do while reading the book that will help promote social and emotional development:

- Discuss what the owls are experiencing and how they might be feeling throughout the book. Make sure to highlight that they miss their mother and that it is alright to miss people when you are not able to be with them. Use this time to reassure children that people go places and we cannot always see them, but they are still fine even when not in sight. You might say, "The owls are sad, because they cannot see their mother and they do not know where she is. I am sure their mother is out doing an errand and is just fine and will be back to be with them very soon."
- Talk about what the owl babies can do to make themselves feel better while their mother is gone. Maybe the owls could look at a book, take some deep breaths or sing a song. Point out what the children can do when they miss their mom or loved one, "When you miss mommy, you like to cuddle your blanket and look at her picture."
- Have a detailed discussion about how the mother returns in the story. Mention how the owl babies and their

mother were all safe throughout the time they were not together.

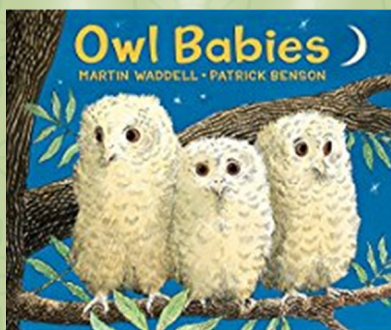
- Reading the same book for several days in a row is a great way to provide opportunities for infants and toddlers to develop a sense of competence and confidence, which is an important part of social and emotional development. They become able to turn pages, point at and label pictures, talk about the story, predict what will happen next, learn new vocabulary words, talk about their own experiences in relation to the story and even make up their own story! Try reading this book for several days in a row and use some of the ideas, activities, and opportunities listed below to enhance social and emotional skill development.

Fun for Everyone! Activities to promote social and emotional development throughout the day:

- Help children decorate a special unbreakable and safe picture frame and then put a picture in it of the people they have a hard time separating from on a regular basis. You can also help them make and decorate a book with people they need to separate from. Allow children use of their books and pictures at any time, they may want to carry them around or sit in a cozy spot with them. Talk with the children about the people in the pictures and point out how they are alright and what they might be doing. "There is your daddy. I know you miss him, I can tell because you cry and are sad when he leaves in the morning. In this picture he is reading you a book. What do you think he is doing right

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now? I bet he is talking on the phone at work.”

- Play peek-a-boo and other types of hiding and returning, and finding games. This can help children understand people are there, gone and then come back. A fun spin on peek-a-boo is to hide a toy under a blanket or behind something and then look for it.
- Help children develop good bye routines. Maybe every time they have to say good bye to mommy or daddy, mommy or daddy gives the child their special picture, in the same physical space (such as a chair or spot by the window so the child can watch him or her walk away), a kiss and a hug good bye, and then leaves with a wave out the door.
- Try to make sure children are always left in familiar places with familiar people. If you need to make a new place familiar, allow the child to bring something from home to make the place seem more like home. A child may have a special blanket or stuffed animal, a lovey, or a particular toy he or she plays with often, use these types of items and allow the child to have access to them as often as he or she wants throughout the day to help create this familiar feeling.

More books that work with separation anxiety:

Appelt, Kathi (2000). *Oh My Baby, Little One*. Boston: HMH for Young Readers.

Rusackas, Francesca (2003). *I Love You All Day Long*. NY: Harper Collins.

Spinelli, Eileen (1998). *When Mama Comes Home Tonight*. NY: Simon and Shuster Books for Young Children.

Tafari, Nancy (1984). *Have You Seen My Duckling?* NY: Tupelo Books.

