

## Separation Anxiety Disorder

Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is a condition in which children have excessive anxiety regarding separation from home or from the people to whom they have a strong emotional attachment. Separation Anxiety is a normal part of children's development but can become a problem if it lasts longer than is developmentally appropriate. Issues that can lead to SAD include trauma in the family due to death or illness, the birth of a sibling, divorce, or school difficulties.

The Harris School (THS) helps children with SAD by providing them with the tools they need to overcome their anxiety about separation. The low teacher/student ratio allows our teachers to be very responsive to the emotional needs of the children. The teachers of THS are trained to aid the children and their parents at times of separation through the use of transitional objects, physical representations of home and a loved one, and through calls to home when appropriate. Through positive, non-punitive interactions with teachers, and in the weekly group therapy for the older children, our students are helped to reflect on what has hampered their efforts in previous schools, and are given the confidence to overcome those issues and feelings.