Understanding Children's Experiences of Safety and Separation

Life Tales

A companion to Jarli Stay's Close

This factsheet supports adults to better understand children's experiences of safety and separation, using Jarli Stays Close as a shared reference point. It does not replace professional support. Instead, it offers insight, reassurance, and practical understanding to help adults respond with calm, connection, and emotional safety.

What This Can Look Like in Children

Some children need closeness to feel safe — especially during early development or after disruption.

These behaviours are signs of attachment, not dependency.

Why This Can Feel So Big

For young children, safety is relational.
When a trusted adult isn't nearby, a child's nervous system may react strongly — even if the separation is brief or familiar.
In Jarli Stays Close, Jarli explores only when he feels safe enough to do so.

Why This Often Comes Out as Behaviour

A child may:

- Cry or protest separation
- Freeze or refuse to move
- Cling tightly
- Regress temporarily

Behaviour reflects a need for reassurance, not a lack of confidence.

What Children Need Most

Children need:

- Predictable responses and routines
- Adults who move at their pace
- Reassurance that closeness is allowed
- Freedom to explore when ready

Security grows from safety, not pressure.

Children navigating separation may:

- Stay physically close to caregivers
- Struggle with transitions
- Become distressed when routines change
- Resist independence others expect
- Rely on comfort objects

Helpful responses include:

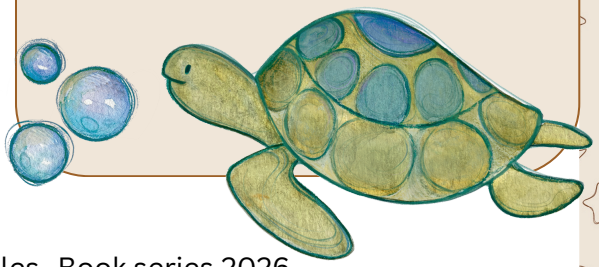
- Staying calm and available
- Allowing closeness without judgement
- Avoiding rushed independence
- Trusting the child's timing
- Confidence grows when safety comes first.

A Gentle Reminder

- A Gentle Reminder
- Closeness and independence are not opposites.
- Children explore best when they know they can return to safety.

Some amazing resources to check out!

- **Mary Dozier video on attachment**
- **The invisible String** children's book
- Beacon House Uk
- **Attachment Focused Parenting** by Daniel Hughes
- **Coaching Parents of Vulnerable Infants: The Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up Approach** Book by Kristin Bernard and Mary Dozier
- **The Power of Repair: A Digital Guide for Parents** by Slumberkins
- Understanding Attachment by Dr kayelene Anderson



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