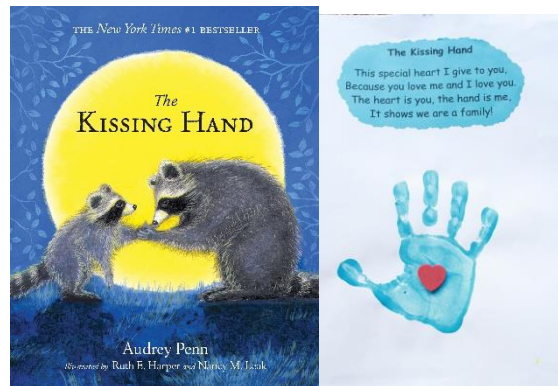


Story Time: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn



It is the first night of school in the forest, but Chester Raccoon does not want to go. To help ease her son's fears, Mrs. Raccoon shares the secret of the Kissing Hand to give him the reassurance of her love any time his world feels a little scary.

Times of separation can be unsettling for children. They may feel a wide range of emotions, such as sadness, fear or even anger. Knowing they have the loving and supportive bond with the special adult in their lives helps to ease these feelings as they venture into the world.

Suggested Craft: Parents and children can work together to design their own special Kissing Hand to make times of separation easier for both.

Parents trace their hand on construction paper. Your child can help you, or you may wish to trace his/her hand inside your own. In the centre, add a heart-shaped sticker or drawing that you can kiss.

Things to Remember:

- ♥ Tearful goodbyes and separation anxiety are a normal part of child development.
- ♥ Understand what children are going through and the importance of providing them with coping strategies that can help them overcome their anxiety.
- ♥ Support young children's feelings of trust and security even if you are not always present.
- ♥ A trusting relationship can promote children's independence and self-esteem, as well as help children recognize and regulate their emotions.
- ♥ A trusting relationship and positive self-esteem can be the foundation for healthy relationships with others.

Adapted from *Handle with Care – Promoting the Mental Health in Young Children*

