



Helping my child return to School after Coronavirus

What is this document all about?

As we begin to think about children returning to school following the coronavirus pandemic it is a good opportunity to consider how your child is feeling and how we can prepare them emotionally and psychologically for the transition journey. We have been through unusual and unsettling times. This booklet anticipates some of the difficulties and anxieties that our children may be feeling as they return. Advice for successful transitions reminds us to focus on relationships as well as recognising the growth, development and learning that has occurred while our children have not been in the setting.

We should also remember that transition is not just an experience for the individual child but for everyone around the child.

In normal circumstances, you would begin supporting and preparing children for starting school on as soon as they found out their receiving school, but with Covid-19, that is now incredibly difficult. We need to evaluate activities that you would normally do in the setting around this time to support the transition process and evaluate the best way to meet the needs of the children and their families. Your child may be returning to the same class as before the lockdown, but things will be different and this should be supported as another key transition in your child's life.

Our key focus areas will be to support your child's well-being, confidence, security and nurturing friendships. Happiness is the priority.

This document gives some tips and advice about how you might help your child through this transition and also supports the sharing of information so that we know what is important to you and your child.

“View transition as a process rather than an event; a clear pathway with different options to support a more personalised approach”



What might I need to be ready to return to school?



Talk to me about my favourite things at school

Praise me when I try to do things independently



Read my favourite stories and then I can share them in school

Tell my teacher how to recognise if I'm feeling anxious or worried



Play games with me that I played in school

Talk to me about staying at school on my own

Talk to me about my friends at school



Make links between routines at home and school e.g. meal times



Talk to my class teacher about what they expect



What can my parents/carers do to help me get ready?



Re-establish routines e.g. mealtimes

Ask for photographs of any changes to my classroom



Share fun things we've learned together with my key person/class teacher



Make a boasting book to help me share what I did during lockdown

Talk to me about things I am doing that my school have suggested

Talk about my behaviour and the emotions behind them with my class teacher



Share ideas that will help me to feel happy and confident

Celebrate what I can do



Maintain good eating and drinking patterns



Top tips for parents and carers



Be prepared for returning to school

- Talk to your child about happy things that happened in school
- Keep in touch with school friends using technology e.g. Google duo, Zoom etc.
- Look at the school website or social media to keep updated
- Share pictures and snap shots of things you do during lockdown
- Share activities you have done suggested by school with friends
- Respond to the things that the school send home or share on social media with your child
- Walk past the school building, if it is close, on some of your walks
- Talk to the school about transition arrangements and social distancing
- Check if there are any virtual tours and video opportunities with the school
- Ask for photographs and information about your child's key person/class teacher to support conversations and build positive anticipation
- Discuss how additional support will be provided for children such as, those with special educational needs, education and health care plans or looked after children
- Re-establish routines around meal times, bed time etc. if necessary
- Share your concerns and expectations with the school
- Explore potential phased return with employers to reduce anxiety around expectations and possible phased return to school

Returning to School

- Talk to the school about your child's development during lockdown
- Talk to the school about the things your child has enjoyed the most during lockdown – their interests
- Share stories and games that you have played during lockdown to support continuity during transition
- Be aware of your own emotions so that you don't transmit your anxiety to your child
- Talk to the staff about your child settling in again, if their interests have changed and how they are feeling
- Follow your child's lead during the transition and respond to their emotions as they happen
- Expect the school to provide a curriculum of learning through play with a clear focus on personal, social and emotional development
- Be positive but be honest; don't dismiss your child's emotional behaviour, they are showing you how they feel
- Act on any concerns swiftly to minimise impact of adversity and maximise support available
- What is important to you and your child when they begin to return to school?

What is important to you and your child when they begin to return to school?



Making a 'boasting book'

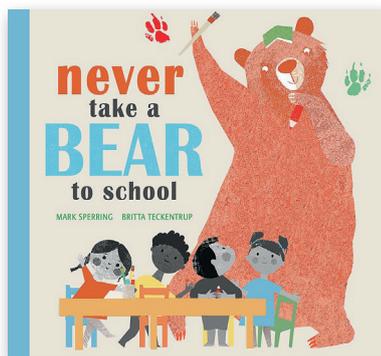
A boasting book can be a book, loose papers, an electronic photo album or photographs stored on a cloud.

The idea is that you will have chosen the photographs with your child. You will already have talked about them together at home. They will also need to be accessible to share in the setting. Make a big deal of sharing them with the setting. Everyone should be excited.

The photographs will help to support the link between home and the school. Children will have had different experiences at home. Using the photographs practitioners can share the experiences and the emotions associated with them creating a link between home and the setting. The content of the photographs are not as important as the conversation that will take place around them and the information key persons/class teacher will gain about your child's experience in lockdown.

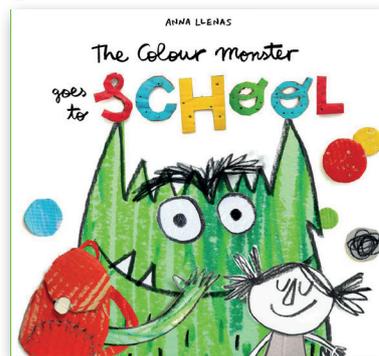


Useful Resources:



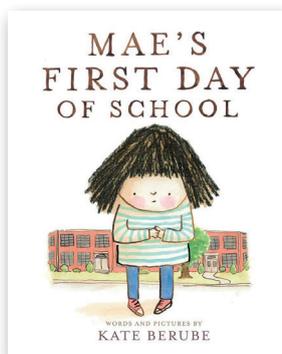
Author: Mark Sperring

Stylish and beautiful, this is a heart-warming book full of bear hugs that will cheer even the most nervous of new pupils.



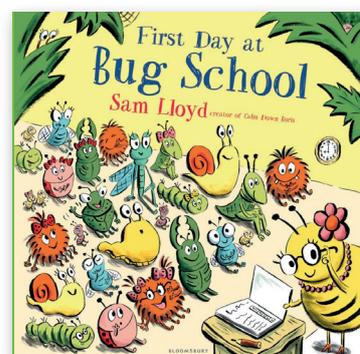
Author: Anna Ilenas

From music lessons, to lunchtime, to making new friends, the Colour Monster's first day of school is filled with exciting new adventures.



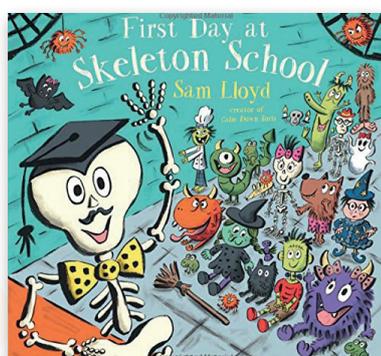
Author: Kate Berube

This picture book acknowledges the anxiety that children might have about starting school, but reassures them that they're not the only one with such worries.



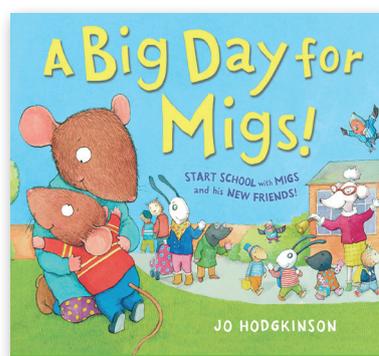
Author: Sam Lloyd

With bright bustling illustrations fizzing with quirky details and insect jokes, this cheery, rhyming introduction to starting school from a unique bugs-eye point of view is reassuring and fun.



Author: Sam Lloyd

This big, bright and funny is a different take on school-themed picture books for little ones that might just be starting in Reception or returning to Year 1, showing that everyone – even skeletons and monsters – goes to school.



Author: Jo Hodgkinson

With its rhyming text, adorable characters, expressive illustrations and humorous details, this exuberant starting school story beautifully portrays the intense dramas of infant classroom emotions.

Websites with general information and resources for parents:

Bitesize and CBeebies have some activities and games linked to starting school;

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/curations/starting-school-curation

Book Trust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. Their website has lots of ideas for families. The following link has suggestions for using stories to help children to make sense of their world and support their wellbeing

www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2019/september/5-ways-reading-together-can-support-childrens-wellbeing/

Tom Hardy reads a bedtime story, Don't Worry Little Crab by Chris Haughton. It's all about a little crab overcoming his worries with a little help and encouragement

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000hs1y/cbeebies-bedtime-stories-753-tom-hardy-the-problem-with-problems

Book trust has information about supporting bedtime routines

www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/bath-book-bed/

CBeebies have a story time app that can be downloaded for free;

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/watch-presenters-cbeebies-storytime?collection=apps-collection

Music activities with young children support their physical and mental wellbeing by encouraging movement and providing a means of expression. The songs on CBeebies music time are varied and fun for everyone.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05532jj

Try out some yoga and mindfulness to help your child to relax and sooth any anxieties

www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga

Characteristics of effective learning – information for parents

<https://family.co/blog/the-child/sue-allingham-characteristics-effective-learning/>

Talking to children about coronavirus

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

A letter to my key person

The following is a template that you might like to use to help you give the school information that is important to you.

Dear.....,

I am looking forward to seeing you again and having lots of fun playing, learning and seeing my friends.

These are some of the things I have been learning at home:

These are some of the things I want to do when I come back to School:

Other things my family want to tell you about my time at home:

Love from



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Lancashire Early Years Consultants

