

We Skoolhouse

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# New School Year



# Starting a New School Year

The start of a new school year is a significant milestone for both children and parents. For many young children, this may be their first experience being away from their parents, which can be both exciting and daunting. Even for those who have been in programming before, transitioning back to school, meeting new teachers, and forming new friendships is a substantial adjustment. Similarly, as parents, you may feel a mix of emotions, from pride and excitement to anxiety and apprehension about this new chapter in your child's life.

## Understanding and Managing Emotions

It's completely natural for both you and your child to experience a range of emotions during this transition. Recognizing and accepting these feelings is the first step towards managing them effectively. Young children may feel nervous about leaving the comfort of home, while parents may worry about their child's ability to adapt to a new environment. Being mindful of these emotions allows us to address them with empathy and patience.



# Actionable Steps to Support the Transition

## Create a Consistent Routine:

Establishing a consistent daily routine helps children feel secure and understand what to expect. Begin adjusting bedtimes, wake-up times, and meal schedules a few weeks before school starts to make the transition smoother. Consistency in routines such as morning preparation and bedtime rituals provides stability and comfort for your child. This stability helps reduce anxiety by creating a predictable structure that children can rely on.



## Visit the School Together:

Visiting the school prior to the start of the school year can significantly ease the transition for both parents and children. Many programs offer an "open house" or orientation where children can come into the building, meet the teachers, and explore the classroom. These visits help familiarize children with their new environment, making it less intimidating on the first day. If your child's program does not offer this, consider walking or driving by the school a week or two before it begins. During these visits, you can start outlining to your child what to expect, saying something like, "School will begin next week. At school, you will meet your teacher and other children in your class. You'll play with toys, listen to stories, and play outside." This preparation helps build anticipation and reduces anxiety, making the first day of school a positive and exciting experience.

## **Establish a Drop-Off Routine:**

Establishing a consistent and quick drop-off routine is crucial for easing the transition to school for both parents and children. A predictable routine provides comfort and makes saying goodbye easier. It's important to avoid lingering, as this can increase anxiety for both you and your child. Instead, create a special goodbye ritual, such as a hug, high-five, or a special phrase that signals your departure. Practicing this routine a few times beforehand can help make it feel more familiar. Most importantly, never sneak out without saying goodbye, as this can cause confusion and distress for your child. Consistent and brief goodbyes help children understand that their parents will return, making the separation process smoother. For infants and toddlers, a loving and predictable goodbye routine can significantly ease their anxiety and help them feel more secure in their new environment.

Here's a script you can follow: "I'm going to read this book with you, and after it's over, we'll give each other a big hug, and then I have to leave." Make sure you follow through with what you say. While your child may become upset, it's important to stick to the plan for consistency and reliability. If you stay longer because they're crying, this will exacerbate the departure, making it even harder in the present and future drop-offs. You can always reach out to the teacher later in the morning to check in on how your child is doing. This consistent approach helps children learn that their parents will always return, building their confidence and making future drop-offs smoother. **Read more about drop-off and pick-up routines in our "Drop-off & Pick-up Routines Packet."**



### **Involve Your Child in Preparations:**

Let your child participate in preparing for school by choosing their backpack, school supplies, and clothes. This involvement gives them a sense of control and excitement about starting school. Allowing them to pick out their favorite items can make them feel more invested and look forward to using them. This process can also serve as a great opportunity to discuss what they will need each day, making them feel more prepared and responsible. For toddlers, let them pick out a special toy or blanket to take to school.



### **Stay Positive and Reassuring:**

Your attitude towards the transition can greatly influence your child's perspective. Stay positive, offer plenty of reassurance, and remind them that it's okay to feel any or a mix of emotions, validating all of their feelings. Emphasize that it's normal to feel nervous or excited when starting something new. Share stories of how you felt when you started something new and how you overcame your own anxieties to help them see that they are not alone in their feelings. Your calm and positive demeanor will help reassure your child that what their feeling is normal and understood.

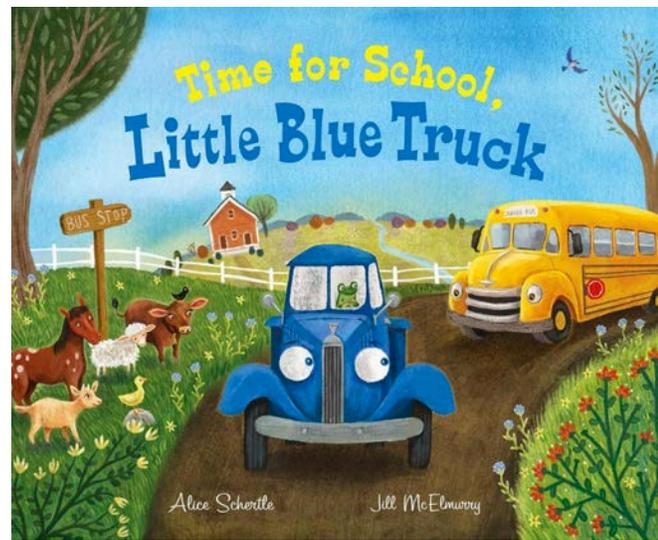
### **Communicate with Teachers:**

Maintain open communication with your child's teachers. Share any concerns or information about your child's preferences and needs to help them support your child effectively. Building a strong relationship with the teacher can ensure that your child's unique needs are met and that any issues are addressed promptly. Regular updates on your child's progress and experiences can help you stay informed and involved, fostering a collaborative partnership between home and school.

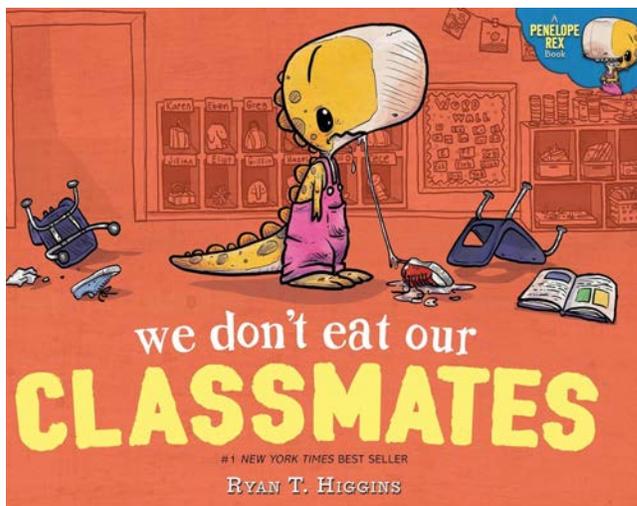
## Read Children's Books About Starting School:

Reading books about starting school can help children understand what to expect and alleviate some of their anxieties. Choose age-appropriate books that discuss the school experience in a positive, relatable, and even humorous ways. Stories about characters who have similar fears and overcome them can provide comfort and build confidence. This shared reading time can also open up questions or discussions about your child's own feelings and questions about school.

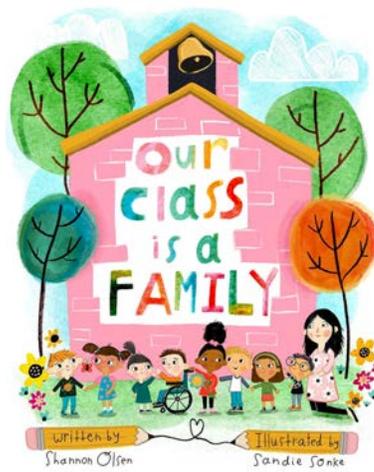
**Wishing You A Wonderful New School Year!**



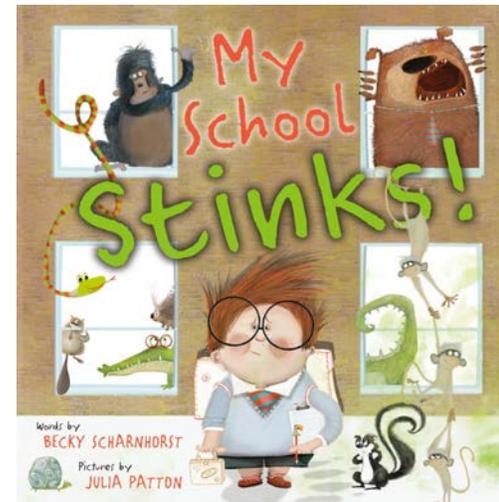
**Time for School Little Blue Truck,**  
by Alice Schertle



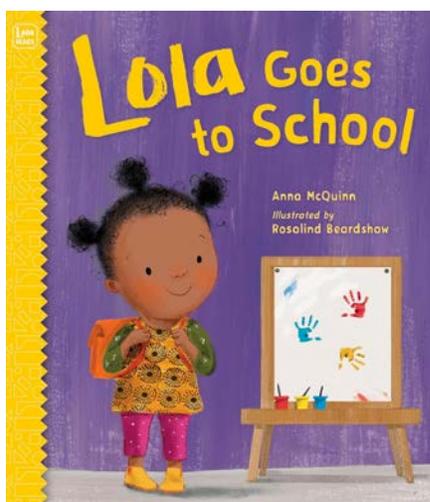
**We Don't Eat Our Classmates,**  
by Ryan T. Higgins



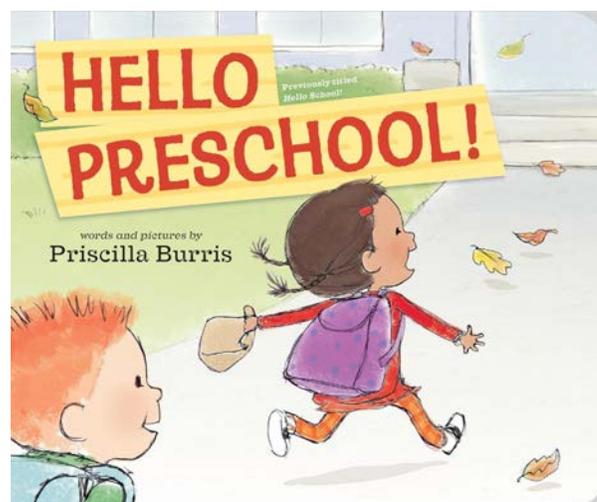
**Our Class is a Family,**  
by Shannon Olsen



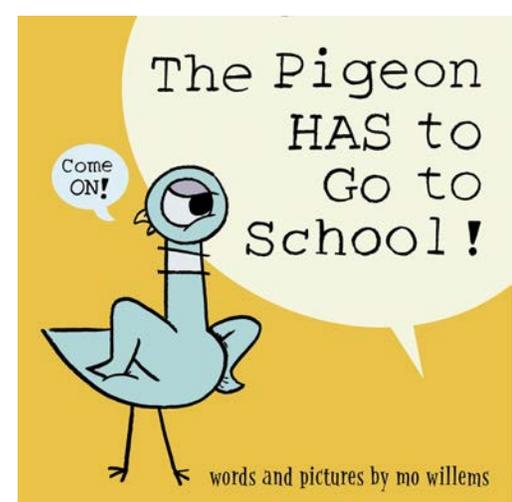
**My School Stinks!,**  
by Becky Scharnhorst



**Lola Goes to School,**  
by Anna McQuinn



**Hello Preschool!,**  
by Priscilla Burriss



**The Pigeon HAS to Go to School!,**  
by Mo Willems



**MADE FOR CHILDREN. DESIGNED FOR YOU.**

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