

Welcoming New Students into the Classroom Community Creating a Welcoming Kit

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Rationale: Many children, in today's society, find themselves joining classrooms well after the beginning of the school year. This pointer was created as a tool to help new students to feel welcome as they make the transition into an already established classroom, providing them with a sense of belonging and significance.

The welcoming kit is created as a tool which the new student takes home at the end of the school day. Its contents include a class book, welcoming information for parents, and a literature picture book. The kit can be designed to either be loaned out or copied so that each student gets their own.

Creating the kit:

- Make a disposable kit by utilizing a medium sized gift bag, OR
- Make a more durable kit by making a fabric bag.
- Encourage student participation by adding messages to or decorating the exterior of the bag.

Make a class book:

- Make a "student handbook" about the class community (who we are, what we like to do, what we think is fun, what we're good at, how we help each other), tell about the events or parts of the school day, tell about the rules and their meaning to the students, etc.
- Make a book about the individuals that make up the class. Each student tells some information about him or herself. After reading, the new student adds his/her information, confirming his/her membership in the class.

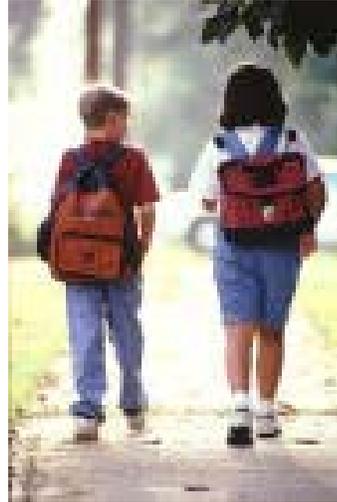
- Include a named picture of each individual in the book to help the new student to make face/name connections.
- As a variation, use these same ideas but make a video instead of a book.

Information for Parents: Provide parents with materials that will help them to orient themselves to the classroom and school community. Such items might include:

- a copy of the parent handbook
- the school year calendar
- building schedules
- parent clubs/organizations
- school resources
- classroom information, including schedules, volunteering information, expectations/rules, how to contact the teacher, etc.
- Parenting tips brochure for assisting the new student (see pages 3 & 4).

A book to share: Sharing a common experience with a character in a book can often help new students to work through some of the stressors that are experienced when transitioning into a new classroom. The following is a list of books about first day school experiences.

- *Make New Friends*, by Rosemary Wells
- *Billy and the Big New School*, by Catherine & Laurence Anholt
- *Wimberley Worried*, by Kevin Henkes
- *The Brand New Kid*, by Katie Couric
- *Pa Lia's First Day*, by Michelle Edwards
- *The New Kid*, by Susan Hood
- *Chicken Soup for Little Souls. The New Kid and the Cookie Thief*, by Lisa McCourt
- *Painted words: Marianne's story, One; Spoken Memories: Marianne's Story, Two*, by Alike



Helping Your Child Adjust to a New School

Tips For Parents

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Tips For Parents

The transition of moving to a new school is a very big life change for a child and it can be a difficult thing to deal with. There are many transitions that come with a move and it can bring with it happiness and excitement, as well as sadness and anxiety. There are several things you can do to make this transition as enjoyable as possible. This brochure provides some useful tips for you to try, as well as a list of resources that you can use to further explore the issue.

Useful Tips

- Talk to your neighbors as soon as you can so you can get a feel for the community and get informed about school organizations
- Focus on having a positive outlook about changing schools.
- Keep communication very open with your child—ask questions and talk about feelings. Validate their feelings and be understanding about the changes your child is facing.
- Make a visit to the school to introduce yourself and your child to the staff and children.
- Visit the school website to get informed about the school policies.
- Get involved in your child's classroom if you can.
- Help your child make friends by providing an opportunity for them to

interact with other children. Welcome your child to invite friends over and help them get involved in sports and clubs such as 4-H, Girl Scouts, etc.

- Be a good model for your child in dealing positively with the new changes.

An excellent way to help your child find ways to successfully deal with the move and to deal effectively with feelings is through the use of children's literature. The following is a short list of books that may be useful:

- *Goodbye House*, by Frank Asch
- *Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move*, by Judith Viorst
- *Pa Lia's First Day*, by Michelle Edwards
- *The New Kid*, by Susan Hood
- *Chicken Soup for Little Souls. The New Kid and the Cookie Thief*, by Lisa McCourt
- *Painted words: Marianne's story, One; Spoken Memories: Marianne's Story, Two*, by Aliko

Resources:

Parenthood.com. *Making Moving Easier For Children*. http://www.parenthood.com/articles.html?article_id=6439

MSN House and Home. *Moving and Relocation: The New Kid in School*. <http://houseandhome.msn.com/move/TheNewKidinSchool0.aspx>

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