

HELP CHILDREN BEGIN A NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH CONFIDENCE

This resource combines a child-friendly social story with 12+ engaging SEL tools and activities designed to help children navigate the transition back to school.

Through discussion, reflection, family connections, calming supports, and real-world practice opportunities, children learn how to:

- Recognize and understand back-to-school feelings
- Build confidence during new experiences
- Use coping strategies when feeling nervous or worried
- Ask for help from trusted adults
- Develop friendships and classroom connections
- Build resilience and a growth mindset

oneGiggle at a time

KEEP SCROLLING TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE THIS RESOURCE!

BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

SOCIAL STORY & SEL TOOLKIT

NEWLY UPDATED

oneGiggle at a time

Welcome to My Class

Hi I am Mrs. Roma
I am going to be your
teacher. I cannot wait to be

OUR NEW SCHOOL YEAR PROMISE

promise to:

- Come ready to learn and grow.
- Be kind to myself and others.
- Try new things, even when they feel hard.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Use my coping tools when I have big feelings.
- Welcome new friends and new experiences.
- Do my best each day.

I Am Ready for a New School Year

(A social story about beginning a new school year with confidence)

WELCOME

includes **12+** SEL Tools & Activities

Build Confidence for a Successful School Year!

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS RESOURCE

one GIGGLE at a time



I Am Ready for a New School Year
(A social story about beginning a new school year with confidence)

At first, these changes might feel unfamiliar. As I practice and learn, my school day will become more comfortable and predictable.

Social Story



#1 How do you feel about going back to school?
#2 What clues does your body give you when you are excited? Nervous?
#3 What is one thing you are excited to learn or do this school year?
#4 How can we show kindness to someone who seems worried?
#5 Why might classmates have different feelings about the first day?
#6 How can we invite someone to join us? What are some situations where we could invite others to join?

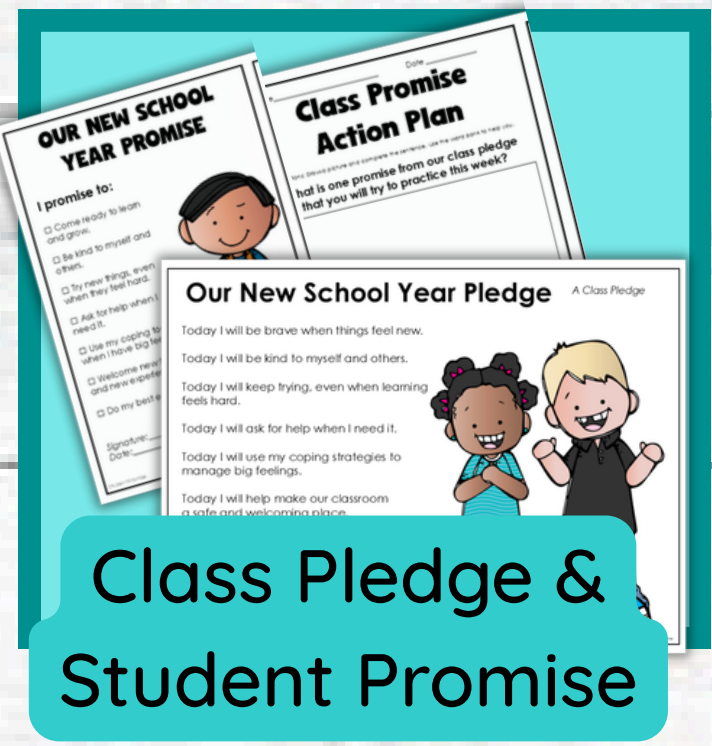
Discussion Cards



Meeting New People
Teaching Point: A new school year may mean meeting new classmates and teachers.

Mixed Feelings
Teaching Point: Sometimes people can feel excited and nervous at the same time.

SEL Teaching Cards



OUR NEW SCHOOL YEAR PROMISE
I promise to:
- Be kind to myself and others.
- Try new things, even when they feel hard.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Use my coping strategies when I feel big feelings.
- Do my best.

Class Promise Action Plan
What is one promise from our class pledge that you will try to practice this week?

Our New School Year Pledge
Today I will be brave when things feel new.
Today I will be kind to myself and others.
Today I will keep trying, even when learning feels hard.
Today I will ask for help when I need it.
Today I will use my coping strategies to manage big feelings.
Today I will help make our classroom a safe and welcoming place.

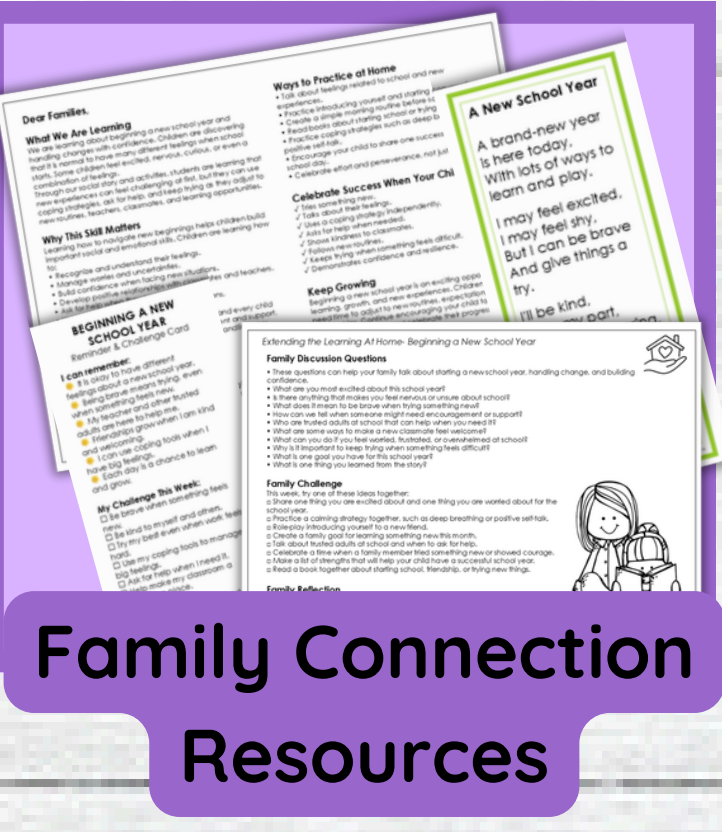
Class Pledge & Student Promise



Calm & Confident Tools
When I need help, I can:
Breathe Take 3 slow breaths.
Pause Pause and count to 5.
Look Look and learn.
Think Use positive self-talk.
Say Use kind words.

Calm & Confident Tools
When I need help, I can:
Breathe Take 3 slow breaths.
Pause Pause and count to 5.
Look Look and learn.
Think Use positive self-talk.
Say Use kind words.
Ask Ask a trusted adult for help.
Move Take a short movement break.
Remember Everyone is learning.
Be Brave Try something new.
Connect! Say hello and make a friend.

Calm & Confident Tools



Dear Families,
What We Are Learning
Learning how to navigate a new school year and new learning opportunities with confidence. Children are discovering how to manage different feelings about the first day of school. Some children may feel nervous, excited, or a mix of emotions. We will use various strategies to help them feel more comfortable and confident in their new school environment.

Why This Skill Matters
Learning how to navigate a new school year and new learning opportunities with confidence. Children are discovering how to manage different feelings about the first day of school. Some children may feel nervous, excited, or a mix of emotions. We will use various strategies to help them feel more comfortable and confident in their new school environment.

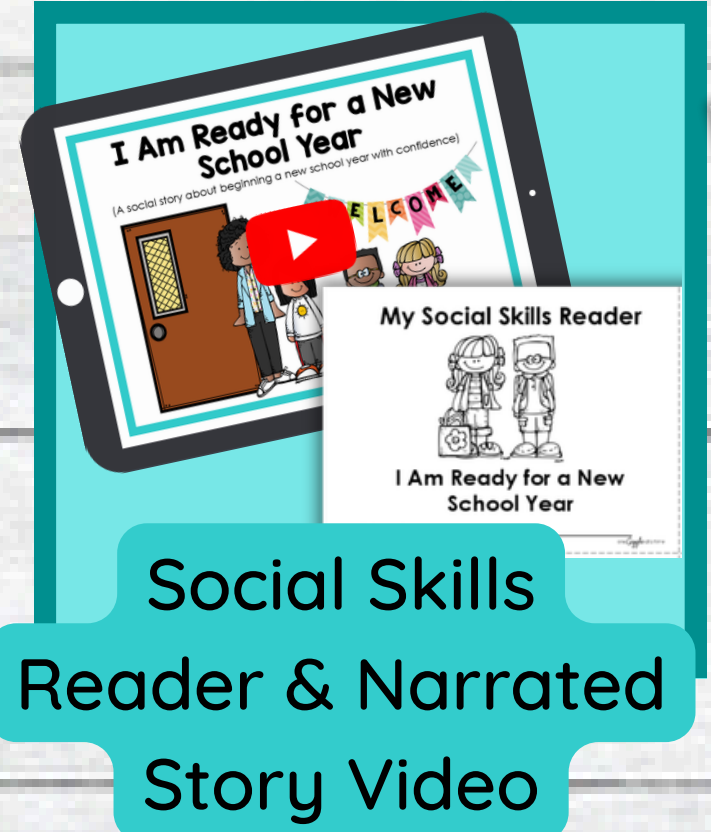
BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR
Home and Challenge Card

Family Discussion Questions
- How do you feel about starting a new school year?
- What are you most excited about this school year?
- What does it mean to be brave when trying something new?
- How can we help when someone needs encouragement or support?
- What are some ways to make a new classroom feel welcoming?
- What can you do if you feel nervous, excited, or overwhelmed?
- Why is it important to keep trying when something feels difficult?
- What is one good thing you know for sure about your child's learning and growing this year?
- Share one thing you learned from the story!

Family Challenge
- Try one of these ideas together:
- Draw a picture of something you are excited about and one thing you are worried about for the school year.
- Practice coping strategies together, such as breathing or positive self-talk.
- Role-play introducing yourself to new friends.
- Talk about the adult staff of school and when to ask for help.
- Celebrate a time when a family member tried something new or showed courage.
- Make a list of strengths that will help your child have a successful school year.
- Read a book together about starting school, learning, or trying new things.

My Social Skills Reader
I Am Ready for a New School Year

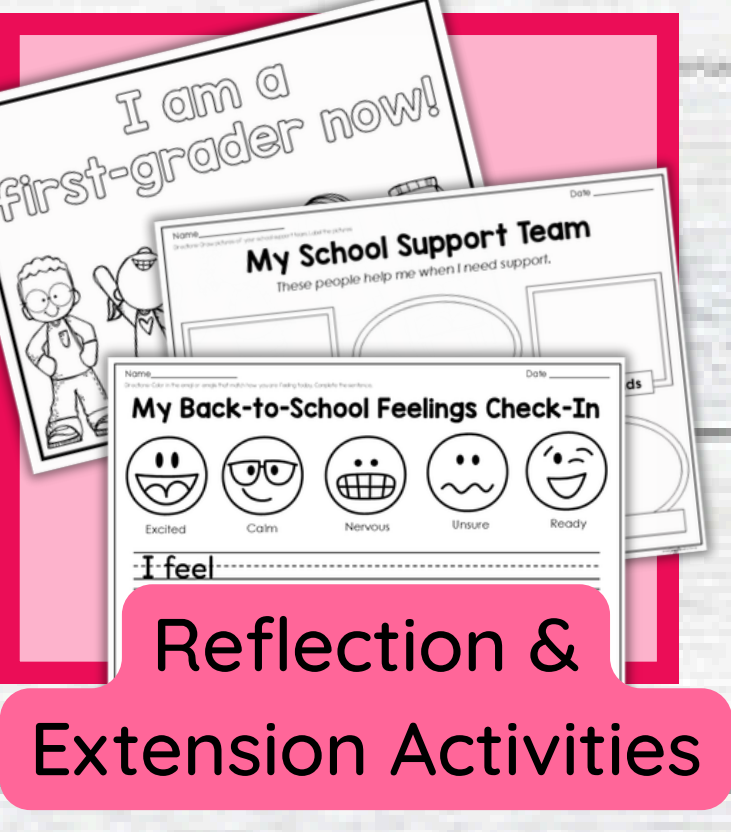
Family Connection Resources



I Am Ready for a New School Year
(A social story about beginning a new school year with confidence)

My Social Skills Reader
I Am Ready for a New School Year

Social Skills Reader & Narrated Story Video

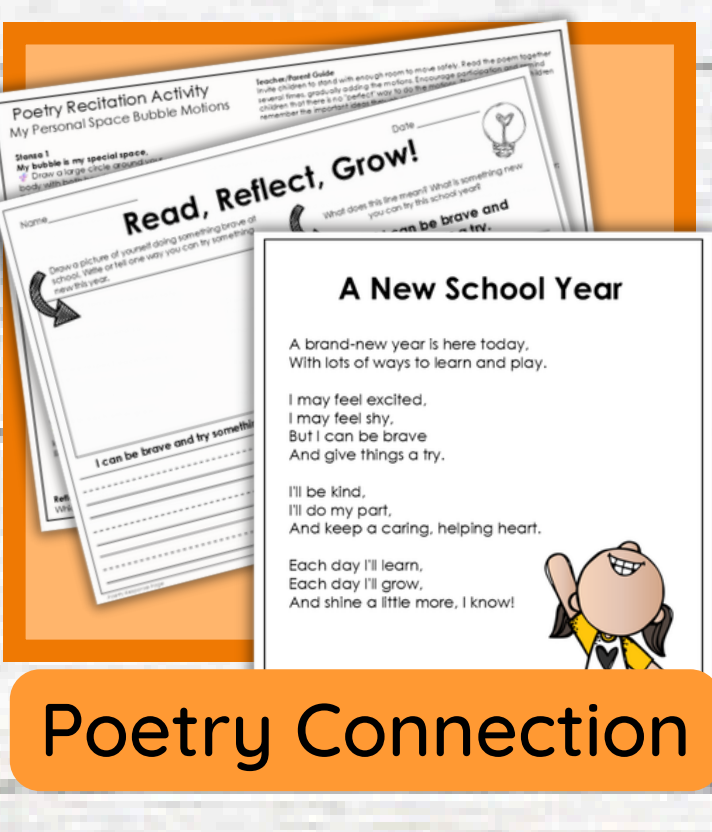


I am a first-grader now!

My School Support Team
These people help me when I need support.

My Back-to-School Feelings Check-In
Excited Calm Nervous Unsure Ready
I feel _____

Reflection & Extension Activities

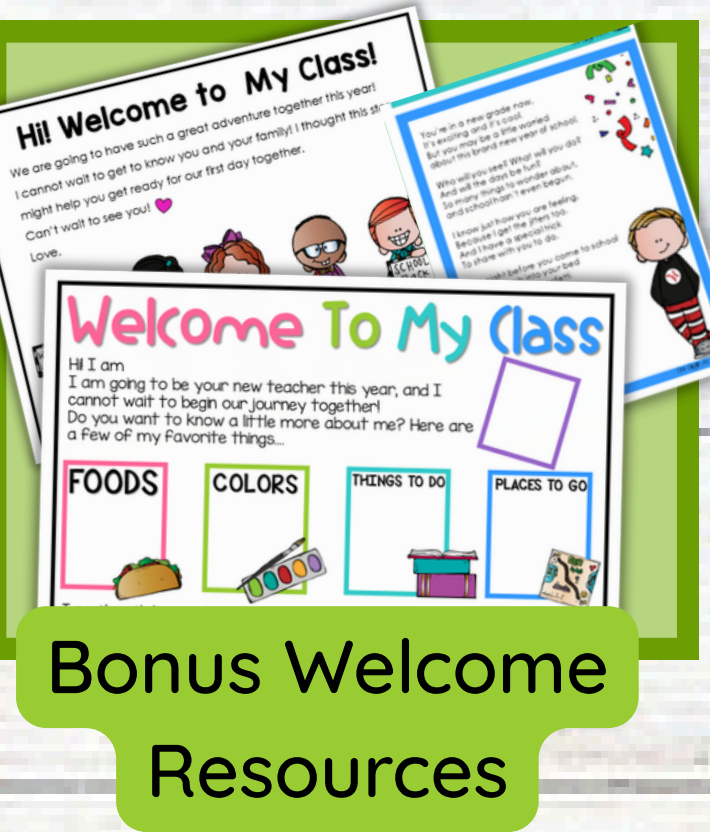


Poetry Recitation Activity
My Personal Space Bubble Motions

Read, Reflect, Grow!
Draw a picture of yourself doing something brave or when you can be brave and try.

A New School Year
A brand-new year is here today,
With lots of ways to learn and play.
I may feel excited,
I may feel shy,
But I can be brave
And give things a try.
I'll be kind,
I'll do my part,
And keep a caring, helping heart.
Each day I'll learn,
Each day I'll grow,
And shine a little more, I know!

Poetry Connection



Hi! Welcome to My Class!
We are going to have such a great adventure together this year! I cannot wait to get to know you and your family! I thought this story might help you get ready for our first day together.
Love,

Welcome To My Class
Hi! I am
I am going to be your new teacher this year, and I cannot wait to begin our journey together!
Do you want to know a little more about me? Here are a few of my favorite things...

FOODS **COLORS** **THINGS TO DO** **PLACES TO GO**

Bonus Welcome Resources

Designed for school, home, counseling, and SEL groups


TEACHING BACK-TO-SCHOOL CONFIDENCE THROUGH REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES

oneGiggle at a time

Children learn that starting a new school year can bring many different feelings and experiences, including:


- Meeting a new teacher
- Learning new routines
- Making new friends
- Trying new things
- Managing worries & uncertainty
- Asking for help when needed
- Building confidence throughout the year

Teachers help children learn and grow. My teacher knows that everyone is different. If I have questions, I can ask. If I need help, I can tell a trusted adult. My teacher is happy I am here.



Sometimes worries show up. I can notice how my body feels. I can use coping tools to help myself feel calm and ready. I can try things like:

- taking three slow breaths
- squeezing my hands
- counting to five
- using positive self-talk
- asking for help
- taking a movement break.
- going to the bathroom
- leaving and going home. I am learning to take care of myself.



I may already know some classmates. I may meet new friends, too. Friendships take time to grow. I can smile, say hello, invite someone to play, listen to others, and be kind. Small steps help build friendships.




I may have lots of feelings about going back to school. Many children and adults have mixed feelings when something new begins. Having mixed feelings means I can feel excited and worried at the same time.

I can't wait to meet my teacher.

What if...

I wonder who will be in my class.



BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

is a transition every child experiences.

This resource helps children understand their feelings, develop coping skills, and build confidence for success at school, at home, and in their community.

12+ ACTIVITIES TO HELP CHILDREN APPLY WHAT THEY LEARN

Class Pledge & Student Promise

- Community commitment
- Personal responsibility

Discussion Cards

- Meaningful conversations
- Reflection opportunities
- Real-life connections

Reflection Activities

- Skill reinforcement
- Drawing & writing responses
- Goal setting

Reminder & Challenge Cards

- Home-school connection
- Weekly practice

SEL Teaching Cards

- Guided discussions
- Problem-solving & critical thinking

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Name _____ Date _____
Directions: Complete each sentence and draw pictures to match.

New Year, New Strengths


1. I am good at _____

2. _____

Our New School Year Pledge

A Class Pledge

Today I will be brave when things feel new.
Today I will be kind to myself and others.
Today I will keep trying, even when learning feels hard.
Today I will ask for help when I need it.
Today I will use my coping strategies to manage big feelings.



BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Reminder & Challenge Card

I can remember:

- ☀ It is okay to have different feelings about a new school year.
- ☀ Being brave means trying, even when something feels new.
- ☀ My teacher and other trusted adults are here to help me.
- ☀ Friendships grow when I am kind and welcoming.
- ☀ I can use coping tools when I have big feelings.
- ☀ Each day is a chance to learn and grow.

My Challenge This Week:

- Be brave when something feels new.
- Be kind to myself and others.
- Try my best even when work feels hard.
- Use my coping tools to manage big feelings.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Help make my classroom a welcoming place.


A New School Year

A brand-new year is here today,
With lots of ways to learn and play.

I may feel excited,
I may feel shy,
But I can be brave
And give things a try.

I'll be kind,
I'll do my part,
And keep a caring,
helping heart.

Each day I'll learn,
Each day I'll grow,
And shine a little
more, I know!



Making Friends

int: Friendships take time to grow. Small acts of kindness help build friendships.




Class Promise Action Plan

Directions: Draw a picture and complete the sentence. Use the word bank to help.

What is one promise from our class plan that you will try to practice this week?

OUR NEW SCHOOL YEAR PROMISE

I promise to:

- Come ready to learn and grow.
 - Be kind to myself and others.
 - Try new things, even when they feel hard.
 - Ask for help when I need it.
- 

DESIGNED TO MOVE LEARNING FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION

SUPPORT THE TRANSITION FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

Poetry Connection

Reinforce confidence, courage, kindness, and growth through engaging poems, recitation activities, repeated reading, discussion, and reflection.

Calm & Confident Tools

Simple coping and problem-solving strategies help children remember what to do when they experience worries, challenges, or new situations.

Bring the Skill Home

Ready-to-use family activities strengthen school-home connections and encourage meaningful conversations about starting a new school year.

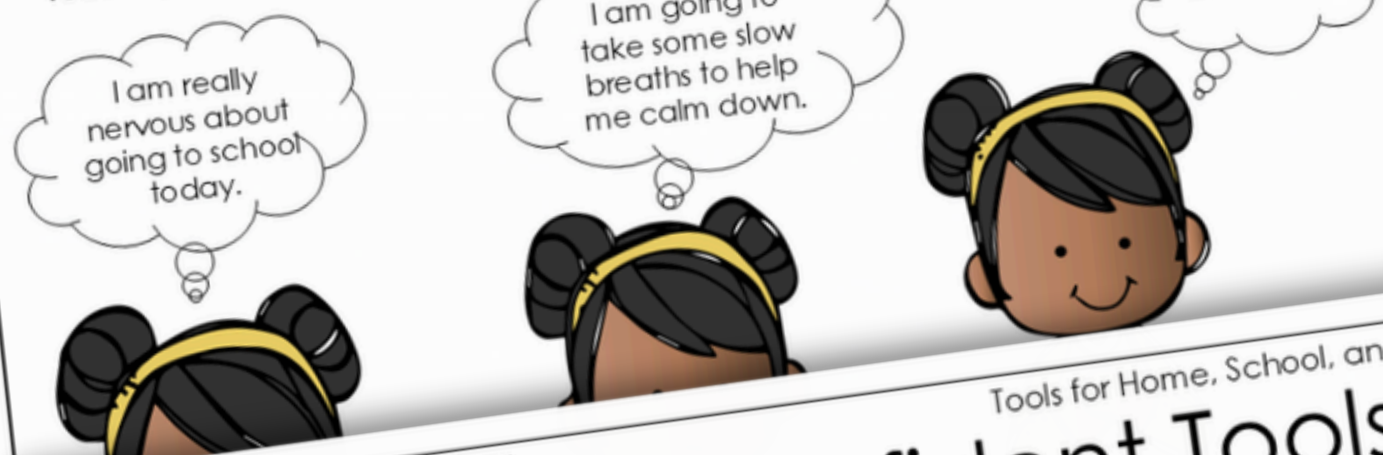
Support for Educators & Caregivers

Story-specific guidance helps adults introduce the skill, facilitate discussions, celebrate growth, and reinforce learning across settings.

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Using Coping Tools

Teaching Point: Coping strategies can help us manage big feelings and get ready to learn.



Beginning a New School Year

Calm & Confident Tools

When I need help, I can:

Breathe

Take 3 slow breaths.

Pause

Count to 5.

Look

Look and learn.

Think

Use positive self-talk.

Say

Use kind words.

Remember

Everyone is

Be Brave

Try something new.

Connect

Say hello and make a friend.

My Social Skills Reader



Ready for a New School Year

Story-Specific Adult Notes & Discussion Guide

Why This Skill Matters

Children are still learning how to understand and respect personal space. They are developing awareness of their own bodies, noticing how others communicate their needs, and discovering how their actions can affect the comfort and feelings of those around them.

Before Reading

Simple ways to activate thinking. Examples:

- What do you think personal space means?
- Why might people need different amounts of space?
- How can you help someone feel better?

Watch for Success

Celebrate when children...

- ★ Keep hands, feet, and feet in space.
- ★ Ask permission before touching.

Why Bring the Skill Home?

Children learn social-emotional skills best when they are practiced in many different settings. When families, caregivers, and educators use...

Bringing the Skill Home

Ways to Use This Section

- Read Together Encourage children to share their...

Calm & Confident Toolbox

Ways to Use the Toolbox

Introduce the Tools Review the toolbox after reading the social story. Discuss what each tool...

Use Social Skills

is a powerful way to help...

Social Skills Poetry Connection

Read, Reflect, Grow!

Use the reflection activity to help children think about the poem's message and connect it to their...

Dear Families,

What We Are Learning We are learning about personal space and how to respect our own space and the space of others. Children are discovering that everyone has a "personal space."

Home Connections: Beginning a New School Year

A New School Year

A brand-new year is here today, With lots of ways to learn and play.

I may feel excited, I may feel shy, But I can be brave And give things a try.

I'll be kind, I'll do my part, And keep a caring, helping heart.

Each day I'll learn, Each day I'll grow, And shine a little more, I know!



BONUS: Includes a narrated video version of the social story for school or home use

WELCOME STUDENTS BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

Editable Welcome Letter Templates

- ★ Introduce yourself before the first day
- ★ Customize with your photo, classroom information, favorite things, and welcome message
- ★ Perfect for Meet the Teacher events, welcome packets, and back-to-school communication

Welcome to My Class Cards

- ★ Attach to a copy of the social story
- ★ Send home before school starts

Night Before School Magic Confetti

- ★ A fun family tradition
- ★ Helps ease back-to-school jitters
- ★ Easy-to-assemble printable cards included

Welcome To My Class

Hi! I am Mrs. Romo.
I am going to be your new teacher this year, and I cannot wait to begin our journey together!
Do you want to know a little more about me? Here are a few of my favorite things...



Help children feel excited, connected, and prepared before school even begins.

oneGiggle at a time

FOODS

1. coffee
2. iced tea
3. sweet potatoes
4. pasta
5. popcorn



I can't wait to
I have sent you
the first day
See you soon!

I Am Ready for a New School Year

(A social story about beginning a new school year with confidence)



You're in a new grade now,
It's exciting and it's cool,
But you may be a little worried
about this brand new year of school.
Who will you see? What will you do?
And will the days be fun?
So many things to wonder about,
and school hasn't even begun.

I know just how you are feeling,
Because I get the jitters too.
And I have a special trick
To share with you to do.

The night before you come to school
As you climb into your bed
Tuck this magic confetti
under your pillow and
under your head.

I will do the same you see
Then sweet dreams
we'll both have that night
And we will wake up
ready for school
in the morning
fresh and bright.



bonus resources for a smooth back-to-school transition

ABOUT ONE GIGGLE AT A TIME



Diane Romo is an elementary educator, children's author, and SEL resource creator dedicated to helping adults support children's social, emotional, and behavioral growth.

Her resources are designed for teachers, counselors, interventionists, and families who want practical, engaging tools that build confidence, strengthen relationships, and help children succeed across school, home, and community settings.



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one giggle at a time is a passionate supporter of:

- ♥ Helping teachers create classroom communities that foster positive relationships.
- ♥ Helping students unlock their potential for greatness.
- ♥ Helping parents provide support for young learners to set them up for success.
- ♥ Making learning FUN!

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social emotional learning



classroom community



parent/family connection



classroom management



teaching ideas



seasonal activities