

# THE PLAYLIST

## Ten Books About Starting School or Nursery

10 Fantastic, practitioner-Curated Books All About Starting School & Nursery

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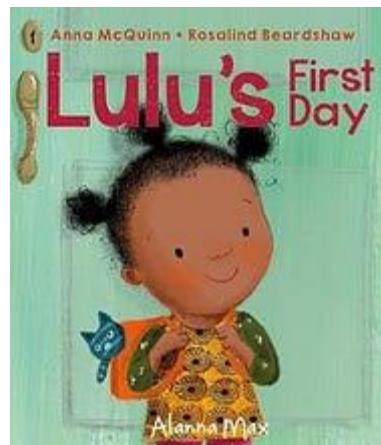
**Hey PLAY People,**

Although many of us have new starters throughout the year, Summer is a busy time for transition. We might be talking to our children about starting school or moving to a new class in September. Books can be a great way to start these conversations, so this month's booklist focuses on starting school or nursery.

We know there are lots of books about transition. If your favourite is not included on our list or if you've shared one of the books with your children, we'd love to hear about it - tell us in the comments.

**As always, we have provided links to the books - these are to help you find the books, they are not affiliate links.**

***Lulu's First Day* by Anna McQuinn and Rosalind Beardshaw**



Children may already be familiar with Lulu from the other stories about her by Anna McQuinn. Lulu is starting preschool. It will be a bit like a storytime group at the library, but Lulu will stay by herself. We see Lulu get her clothes ready for preschool and get up early to get ready to go on her first day. Mummy stays for a little while, then goes, and Lulu has to choose what to do. Having looked at a story, she gets an idea and finds someone who wants to join her game.

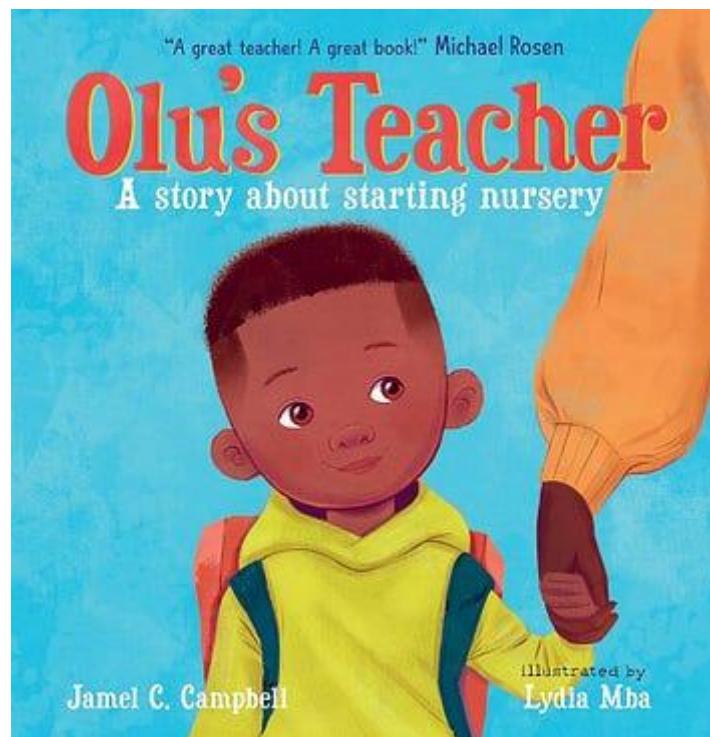
This story could be lovely to share when children visit for settling sessions, or to recommend to families.

### **Questions and comments**

- Has anyone got a bag for their new school?
- What will you wear for school? Or You will have a \_\_\_\_ jumper to wear at school.
- Everyone's water bottles go in this box ...
- I wonder how Lulu feels about going to preschool. How do you know?
- I wonder what you will play with at school/preschool.../ You could play .....

[Lulu's First Day a book by Anna McQuinn and Rosalind Beardshaw.](#)

***Olu's Teacher* by Jamel C. Campbell and Lydia Mba**



Olu is feeling nervous about starting school. His parents say he will be ok, his friends will be at school, and his teacher will look after him. But Olu is still worried, "What are teachers like?" he wonders.

When he arrives at school, he meets his teacher, "Jay." He is not a scary monster and there are lots of things to do at preschool. Jay plays music, tells stories and before Olu knows, Mum arrives to collect him.

This book is written by Jamel Carly Campbell, an early years teacher, who has based the story on many years of experience in early childhood education and care settings. The story not only provides the opportunity to recognise the worries and feelings children have about starting preschool, but also reminds us of the importance of belonging.

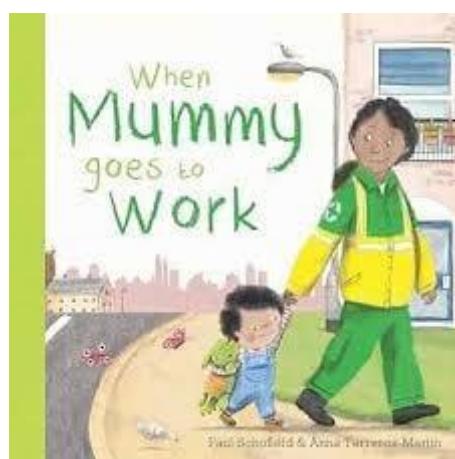
An author's notes are included at the back of the book, which is valuable to support adults in reflecting on their practice. There are also suggestions for supporting children with the transition to preschool.

### **Questions and comments**

- Olu has butterflies in his tummy - where in your body do you notice feeling worried?
- What's your favourite thing? Or What would you draw?
- What kind of music do you like listening to at home?
- What are your teachers called? Or Your teacher is called .....

[\*\*Olu's Teacher: A Story About Starting Nursery a book by Jamel C. Campbell and Lydia Mba.\*\*](#)

***When Mummy Goes To Work & When Daddy Goes to Work* By Paul Schofield and Anna Terreros-Martin**



In these stories, we see the parents' days at work alongside their child's day, with Nan and Grandad (when Mummy goes to work) or at preschool (when Daddy goes to work). These are lovely books to share to prompt conversations about what parents do during the day when children are at their school or setting.

For some children, their childcare arrangements will change when they start school, and these books will support conversations about what children will be doing while their parents or carers are at work. These books are also a lovely reminder that even when parents or carers are not with their children they still think about them.

### **Questions and comments**

What do you think Mummy's/Daddy's job is?

I wonder what your mummy/daddy does at work?

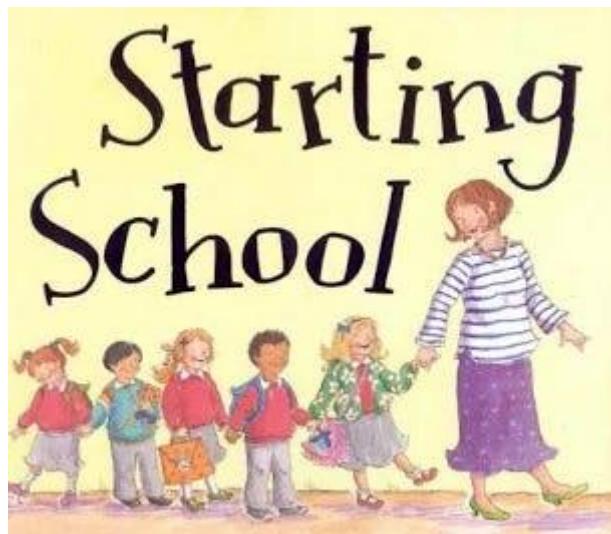
Before you go to school in the mornings, you will go to ....

What are they having for lunch?

[\*\*When Mummy Goes to Work a book by Paul Schofield and Anna Terreros-Martin.\*\*](#)

[\*\*When Daddy Goes to Work a book by Paul Schofield and Anna Terreros-Martin.\*\*](#)

**Starting School** by Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg



This book is probably in lots of classrooms already. It was originally published in 1988, and some aspects of classroom practice may be a little different to your reception classes. Despite these differences, this book will support conversations about what happens at school. It captures not just the first day at school but the first term, recognising the ups and downs of life at school. If your children have PE in the hall or

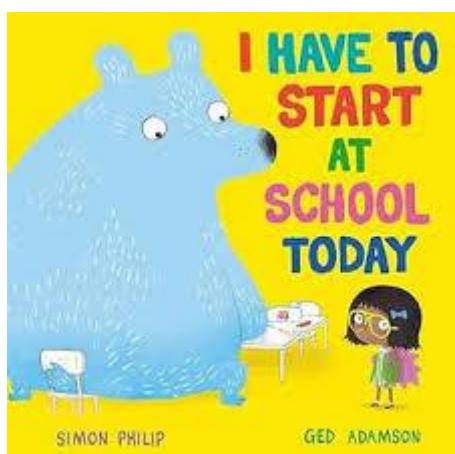
join assemblies, this book can introduce these events to them, and you can talk to them about how this happens at your school.

### **Questions and comments**

- I wonder how everyone is feeling while they are standing in the playground?
- Is there a mat where everyone sits in your new classroom? Or In our classroom we all sit on the carpet - everyone has a space to sit.
- Do you know what assembly is?
- If you were in that class, where would you like to play in?

### [Starting School: The timeless picture book for new school starters](#)

#### ***I Have To Start At School Today* by Simon Philip and Ged Adamson**



This story recognises the feelings children may have about starting school in a way that brings gentle humour to the situation. The rhyming text explores a child's worries about what may happen at school, from an irate rhinoceros to a selfish bear. Grandma overhears and listens to all the child's fears before asking a simple question, "What if it goes right?"

This funny story shows the power of talking through worries and of knowing what to expect.

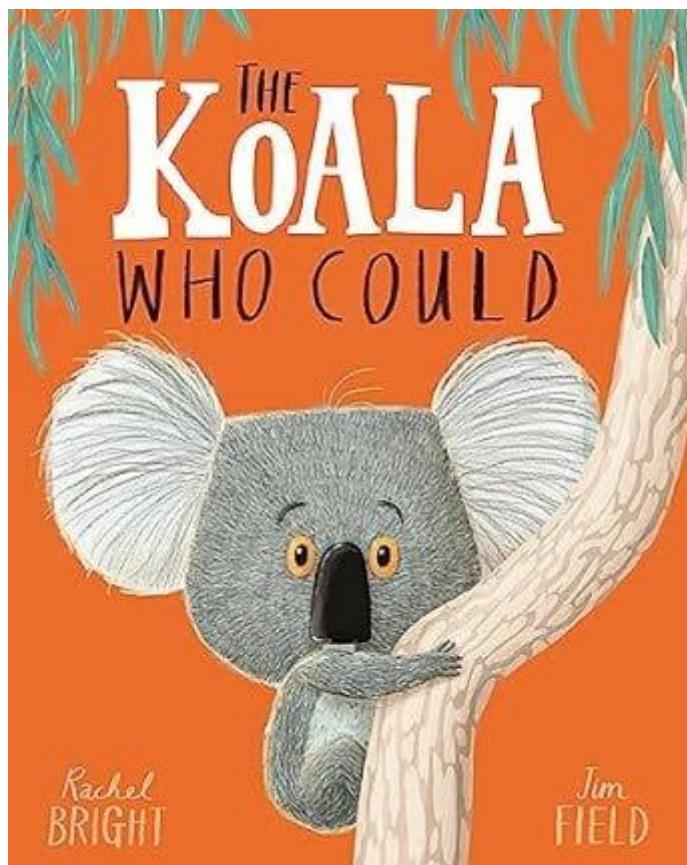
### **Questions and comments**

- Do you think she really thinks there will be a rhino at school?
- Do you know what irate means?

- What shows us the rhinoceros is irate?
- What could her brother do to help her feel better?
- Who will be at your school?

### I have to start at school today

***The Koala Who Could*** by Rachel Bright and Jim Field



Kevin the Koala felt safe, clinging to his tree and staying high up. He felt scared of trying anything new, as he watched the other animals playing, he wondered if he would feel happier down there. Kevin avoids change as the world moves on around him. Until one day, something happens that means Kevin has to try something new.

This rhyming story can help children talk about change and their worries about doing something new.

### **Questions and comments**

How do you think Kevin feels when he is in the tree?

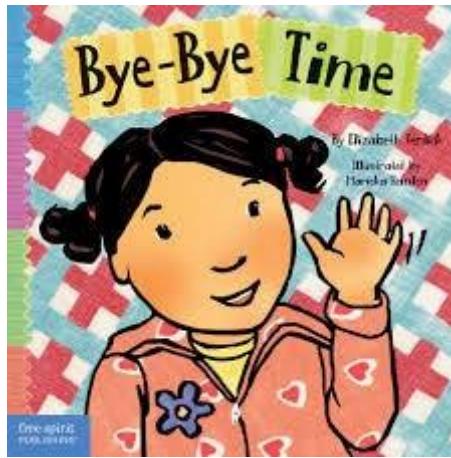
What does it feel like when you do something new?

Have you tried anything new?

What could be great about your new nursery/school/class?

**The Koala Who Could** a book by **Rachel Bright and Jim Field.**

**Bye-Bye Time** by **Elizabeth Verdick and Marieka Heinlen**



For lots of children, saying goodbye can feel difficult. In this story, we see how one child says, “Bye-bye,” and what they can do if they feel sad. This is a short, simple story that will start conversations with your children about what they can do if they feel sad when it is time to say goodbye.

#### **Questions and comments**

What do you do when it is time to say, “Bye-bye,” to your grown-up?

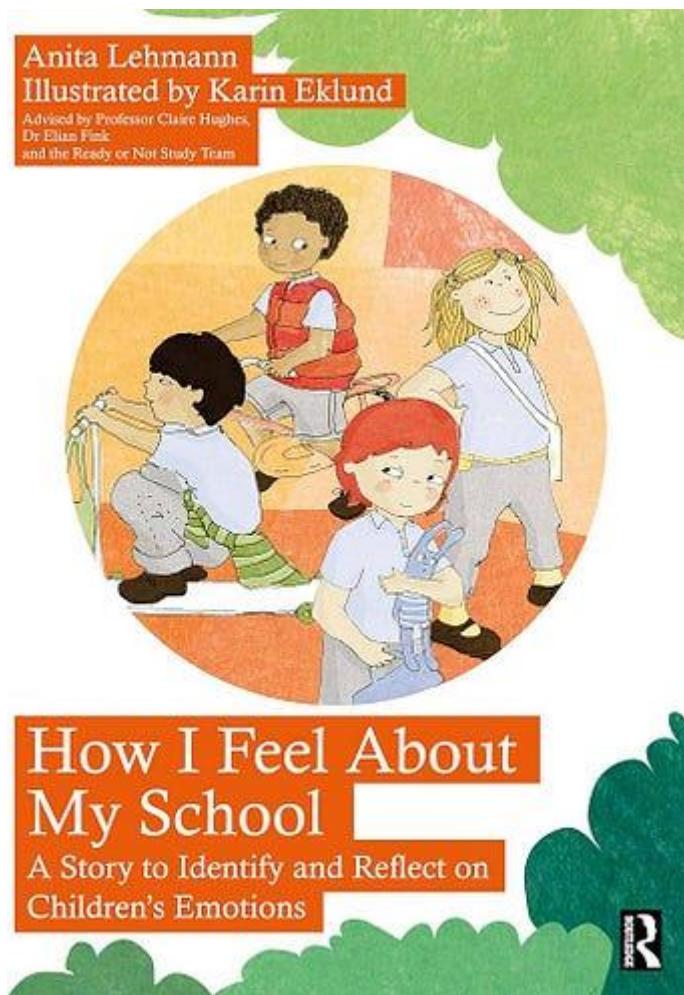
Let's practice starfish breathing ...

What could you do if you feel sad when it is time to say goodbye?

What does your grown-up do while you are at nursery/school?

**Bye-Bye Time** a book by **Elizabeth Verdick and Marieka Heinlen.**

***How I Feel About My School*** by **Anita Lehman and Karin Eklund**



This book was a collaboration between the Author Anita Lehman, illustrator Karin Eklund and a team of researchers and was written to support parents to better understand how their children feel as they start school and move between classes.

The book is based on the *Ready or Not Study*, which was led by Professor Claire Hughes at the University of Cambridge's Department of Psychology.

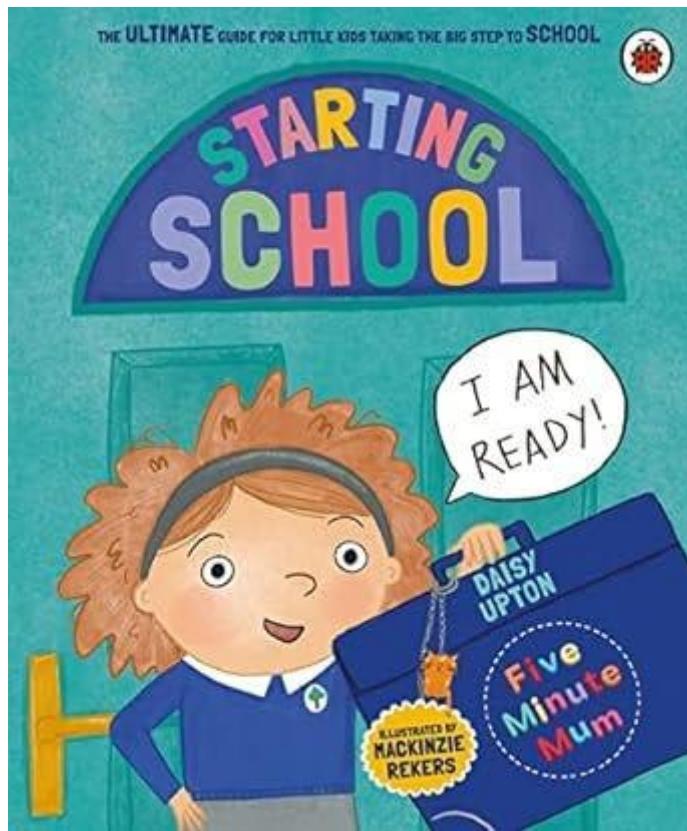
Read more about the study = [It takes parents a year to 'tune in' to their child's feelings about starting school](#)

*How I Feel About My School* follows four children through their day at school, starting from the school gates and including different elements of the school day such as playtime, quiet time and show-and-tell. The book has prompts to encourage children to talk more about their feelings and experiences at school. And can open up conversations about the ups and downs of school life. As the book includes prompts, we have not included suggestions in our booklist.

There is also a guide for parents and teachers, which can be purchased separately - *The Psychology of Starting School: An Evidence-Based Guide for Parents and Teachers*

### How I feel about my school

***Five Minute Mum: Starting School - The Ultimate Guide For New School Starters* by Daisy Upton**



Many parents will be familiar with Five Minute Mum from her books or social media. In this children's book, she guides children through starting school, from meeting their teacher to going to assembly. And along the way, there are ideas for games, activities and questions that will help children to get ready for starting school.

This may be a book you use in your setting, or one you add to your library so parents can look at it at home.

We haven't included questions and prompts this time, because there are lots of ideas in the book already.

**[Five Minute Mum: Starting School: The Ultimate Guide for New School Starters a book by Daisy Upton.](#)**

## Make Your Own Book/Story!

While there are many wonderful books to share about transitions, making a personalised story allows you to share exactly how children's day will be. This does not need to be complicated, you can simply include details about the routine and classroom. You could share this as a book or as a transition mat with photos and key bits of information about the people, room, building and routine.

Include spaces and prompts for families to complete to personalise it even more - for some children, starting school will also involve changes in childcare and capturing the full day will support them with the transition.

### Possible prompts

You may include more or less detail about the day depending on your routine and children.

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_ years old and in September I am going to \_\_\_\_ school.
- My teachers will be \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.
- Describe your child's morning routine on a school day. Will they go to the childminder, breakfast club before school, who will take them to school?
- For example, in the morning, \_\_\_\_ will take me to \_\_\_\_\_. I will have my breakfast and then \_\_\_\_ will take me to school.
- I will go into my classroom through this door ... I will say goodbye in ....
- I will put my coat and bag on my peg, and my water bottle in the basket.
- Then I will .....
- These are the toilets I will use - if I need help, I can ask a grown-up.
- There are lots of things to do at school, I can .....[include pictures of indoor and outdoor areas]
- When it is time to finish, \_\_\_\_ will sing our tidy time song [*include what happens when it is time to tidy*]. I will help tidy up with the other children and grown-ups.
- At lunchtime, I will have ..... In the hall.
- \_\_\_\_ will help me at lunchtime.
- After lunch I will .....
- Then .....

- At the end of the day, everyone will sit on the carpet and listen to a story.
- Then I will get my coat, bag and water bottle and \_\_\_\_\_ will pick me up from here [include photo].
- After school, I will .....[Describe your child's routine after school, and who will pick them up.]
- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are really excited about me being in their class.
- Include the visual timeline you use in your class, so children can begin to get familiar with the class routine.



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