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Dealing with big emotions



Prepare your child in advance for school

Try a visual count down calendar to count the days left to school.



For younger children thinking of it in terms of how many sleeps before school can help understand the days better.



Remember children take clues from the tone we use so when we present as calm and supportive it can help allay fear/anxiety.



It's important not to minimise or dismiss a child's big feelings about school and naming those feelings can be the start of helping a child feel more grounded.

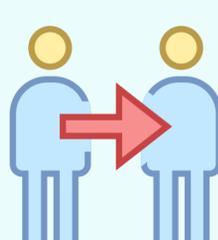


Feeling games/cards may be useful to play out the feelings as talking may not be at the child's level.



Focus on sameness

Discuss what will be the same in school e.g., friends, uniform, school, bus etc.



Look for the positives and the fun!

While your child is enjoying an activity they love (painting, drawing, singing, Lego, computers, PE or freely playing with friends) use it as a chance to point out all the fun things they will get to do at school.

Build familiarity with the School Environment

Explore the school website with your child to make them familiar with teachers and the environment to reduce possible fears.

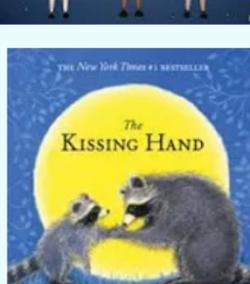
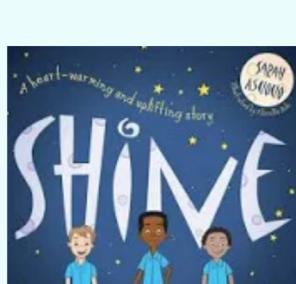
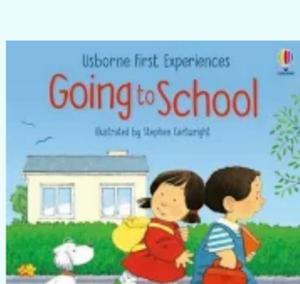
If siblings have been in the school before encouraging them to share practical info (where the school hall is, where the toilets are, what's in the play area, etc.).

Use Storytelling to Prepare

Provide an easy to follow story or visual story (comic / social story).

You might like to choose a book from your library about starting school to open the conversation.

Here's a few our team really like.



You might like to create a visual social story using pictures of the school, setting out where they will go and who they will meet (school social media accounts and websites are useful for gathering images). Free school social story templates are widely available online (e.g. on [twinkl.com](https://www.twinkl.com)).

