

Bibliography List: School Transition Early and Middle Years

Li Ma

University of Pittsburgh

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Transition to Kindergarten

Carlson, N. L. (1999). *Look out, kindergarten, here I come!* New York, NY: Penguin Group.

This picture book uses mice to represent kids and their families. It's the first day of kindergarten, and Henry is raring to go. First he eats a good breakfast and packs up his supplies. Then he and Mom are off to school. Henry knows he's going to have a busy day: there will be stories to hear, letters and numbers to learn, pictures to paint, songs to sing—not to mention lots of new friends to make. When he gets to the building, though, it looks kind of scary, and for a moment Henry's not sure he's ready for school. But he soon discovers that the only thing he's not ready for is how much fun kindergarten would be.

This book is composed of short sentences and pictures which are easy to understand. Parents can read this book to children to help children understand their reasonable fears more specifically and get prepared to face them.

Hays, J. A. (Davick, L.) (2007). *Kindergarten countdown*. New York, NY: Alfred A. K.

This is a picture book in which a girl is counting down the days before kindergarten begins. She wants to go to kindergarten so much and each day she gets happier and happier because she can learn and play in kindergarten. Parents can use the book to clarify for their children certain expectations and emotional changes associated with kindergarten. Getting children excited about what kind of knowledge they can learn in kindergarten is one of the strategies offered in this

book. The words used in this book are simple. Some children may need parents read it to them if they have little literacy knowledge, but children can get the main idea from the pictures.

McGhee, A. (Bliss, H.) (2002). *Countdown to kindergarten*. New York, NY: Silver Whistle Harcourt, Inc.

In this book, there are ten days before the first day of kindergarten. Although the girl in the story can do a lot of things like feed the cat all by herself, count backwards from ten to one without stopping, and blow a chewing-gum bubble and hold it longer than any of her friends, she can't yet tie her shoes all by herself. This makes her feel so bad and nervous about going to kindergarten. After she gets to kindergarten, she discovers that almost all of her new classmates can't tie their shoes either. She soon learns that there is not that much to worry about.

Teachers in preschool or parents can use this book to help their children understand they don't have to do all the things they think they need to acquire before kindergarten, and kindergarten is another place for them to learn and grow and it's not frightening at all. Children can learn to overcome their perfectly normal and common worries through this book.

Countdown to Kindergarten, Boston. (n.d.). *Countdown to Kindergarten, Boston*.

Retrieved October 29, 2011. from <http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org/>

This official website is of a program which supports children and their family in the kindergarten transition process named countdown to kindergarten. It's a one-year program before kindergarten begins which has been established for 10

years in city Boston. This program aims at helping children and their parents overcome the difficulties in transition years to kindergarten including aspect of learning opportunities. It emphasizes involvement of families, educators and the community. The Mayor Menino, committed to put school readiness promotion into action in which parents can get more involved in children's education process from the very beginning, with more knowledge of how important kindergarten is; also it helps parents choose the appropriate school for their children and register Boston Public Schools (BPS). The main strategy the program use is 5-step to kindergarten: visit and choose schools, register for schools, meet the school, get ready for school and final step start school. Online resources are abundant and such strategies not only can help citizens of Boston, also parents from other cities can get benefit from skills introduced on the website. Very interestingly, the website has different language versions such as Chinese, Spanish which help assist more diverse residence to be involved.

Wild, M. (Legge, D.) (1999). *Tom goes to kindergarten*. Toronto: Albert Whitman & Company.

This picture-book features a panda family. In mom, Tom and baby's morning walk, they can see a kindergarten. Tom wants to go to kindergarten because he sees children in it play a lot. When he is home and asks parents to play with him, they are always busy. One day, Tom goes to kindergarten and suddenly he doesn't want his parents leave. His parents stay at kindergarten and together they all have a nice day. The second day of kindergarten, Tom doesn't need his parents to stay with him

anymore, but his parents want to stay and play. They are not allowed. After his parents finish work, they want to know what Tom plays in kindergarten today.

The characters are adorable. Since even Tom's parents want to stay and play in kindergarten, parents and prekindergarten teachers can use this book to illustrate how fun kindergarten is. The sentences in the book are simple and easy to understand for children.

Transition to First Grade

Carlson, N. (1999). *First grade, here I come!* New York, NY: Penguin Group.

It's the same mouse boy who starred in "Look Out, Kindergarten, Here I come!" Now he needs to go to first grade. His mother asks him how the first day of first grade is; he is not sure how to answer the question since so much happened that day. The teacher is not like his kindergarten teacher. The fifth graders hog the monkey bars, and there are too many new things to learn which makes him feel stressed. On the other hand Henry recalls something interesting and shares with his mother such as the cool classroom science corner, a new friend who also likes soccer, and how he's learning to read books. He realizes that first grade won't be so bad after all.

Even without parents' help, children can understand most of the meaning of the book from the pictures. Parents can read this book with their children. This book will help children think about their first day of first grade and the excited feelings that go along with it. The most important part is teaching children to have a positive attitude towards their future experience, and look more at the bright side.

deGroat, D. (2005). *Brand-new pencils, brand-new books*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

This picture book is about the first day of the first grade for Gilbert. He is excited and nervous at the same time. He has new school supplies, but he will also get a new teacher and new kids in his class. He wonders if the teacher will be nice and if Patti will still be his best friend. In this humorous and reassuring story, Gilbert learns that first grade is not what he had expected. Lewis is a bully and Philip already knows how to read big fat books. But Mrs. Byrd is nice, and she helps Gilbert discover that everyone has his or her own special talent. This book addresses some difficult issues such as bullying. It also may help children trust that they themselves have talent and are good students.

The words in the book are not hard and some kindergarteners may have the ability to read by themselves. Still, if parents or pre-kindergarten teachers can read with them and in the process, they can activate their children to think about hard things may happen like bullying in first grade and teach them some strategies and healthy attitude towards those issues. This will be very helpful to prepare children for first grade. Also children may be encouraged by Gilbert's experience to explore their own talent, which can be an interesting experience for parents and their kids.

Preller, J. (Ruth, G.) (2010). *A pirate's guide to first grade*. New York, NY: Feiwel and Friends.

This book is composed of poems with pictures. It depicts a boy's internal world when he has to go to first grade the first day. He imagines that he is a pirate and his

pirate crew is always around him. Although he experiences a lot of frustrating events the first day, the pirate's spirit inspired him to fight. However, he still finds it difficult to make it through the whole day. His new teacher helps him and makes such a "little pirate" feel better in the first day of first grade.

Everybody may have some imaginative friends or tend to imagine themselves as certain figures, which makes this book easy to relate to. The poems are beautiful and can put you in the situation. Parents can read this book with their children since the poems may be not that easy for children before entering the first grade. They can talk with their children about how they are feeling about the first day of first grade which may be coming up by talking about their own imaginary friends and assumption of first grade.

Quackenbush, R. (Nascimbene, Y.) (2010). *First grade jitters*. New York, NY: Harper.

This is a picture story about a young boy who is about to enter the first grade and doesn't know quite what to expect. First, he denies admitting that he is upset about the unknown future, and then with the help of his parents, he realizes his fears. He has questions which include wanting to know if his friends will be there, if he has to know how to read and spell, and if he will understand everything his teacher says. His friends come to chat with him, exchange their perceptions of first grade and then play with him. Finally, he stops being worried about first grade and begins to look forward to its coming.

Teachers in kindergarten or parents can use this book to clarify children's feelings towards first grade. With the help of this book, parents and teachers can convey the idea that their worries are completely normal and first grade is not scary at all. They can still have friends and there is always a bright side. The book also shows parents and teachers that support from parents and peers for children to explore their feelings and expectations is very crucial in school transition period.

Terrill, K., & Marin, P. (Otteley, R. & Aucutt, S.) (2011). *Summer fit: Exercises for the brain and body while away from school (K-1)*. Salt Lake City, UT: Monkey Feather Books.

This book is a great tool to help the parents who want to assist their children structure the transition period from kindergarten to first grade. The first several pages are guidelines for parents about how to use this book and basic suggestions on nutrition, physical exercise. Then, the book offers ten weeks of activities for children. Each week contains physical exercise work and some other skill learning plan, such as alphabet learning, drawing, basic mathematics knowledge, and some other interesting common knowledge. Before the plan for each week, there is an explanation of the purpose for this week which is very useful for parents understand what they're doing.

The level of the tasks is appropriate for upcoming first graders and children can reach each goal step by step. Children can use the book with the instructions from their parents or guardians. This book can make the summer holiday before first grade fun.

Wright, M. (2008). *Jake starts school*. New York, NY: Feiwel and Friends.

In this hilarious picture book, Jack goes to school first day. He doesn't want his mom and dad to leave him there alone so much. Then his parents have to stay and they do everything together, sitting at Jack's desk, sharing snacks, and playing on the seesaw. It makes his parents so uncomfortable: sitting in the same chair makes them can't even feel their feet. Although such situation may not happen in real life, fears of kids are so real. Jake finds fun with the help of his teacher and his parents feel better and relief. This book will delight and reassure anxious children and their parents.

Parents can read this book together with their children. It can help children and their family to understand their anxiety towards such huge changes in life. Children will be starting a more and more independent life without their parents; it's a good lesson for them to get prepared. Also Children may get some insight that they can discover something interesting in first grade after all, and it will be a fun thing to go to school.

Transition to Middle School

Bernstein, E. (2002). *Middle school and the age of adjustment: A guide for parents*.

Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

This book is a very practical and clearly structured guidebook for parents. The topics discussed include adjustment to sixth grade; changes in boys and girls; the power of the peer group; school achievement; how to communicate with teachers; outside interests and positive identity; the sexual messages in our society; effective

communication; boundaries, limits, expectations and consequences; development and the passage of time; special needs children; sibling conflict and violence in schools. The issues discussed in this book are very important and include many topics parents are eager to know about. They have middle-schoolers who are becoming rebellious and easily trapped in different kinds of trouble because of their rapid physical and emotional changes. Parents can gain a deeper understanding of their children's emotional and physical changes and know more about the situations their children are faced with. With a better understanding, parents can approach their children more easily and offer their help.

The reading level of the book is appropriate for generally educated parents. There aren't many terms hard to understand. Not only parents but also middle school teachers can benefit from strategies this book offers.

Erlbach, A. (2003). *The middle school survival guide*. New York, NY: Walker & Co.

This interesting book addresses many popular and practical issues and concerns for students entering middle school. Topics include teachers, academics peers, the opposite sex, home life, puberty, really serious stuff, being yourself and so on. Generally speaking, this book offers much information to help children understand themselves better and it is useful for them to build self identity. It talks about a lot of changes middle school students will be faced with. There are also many comics to make it easier and less boring to read. The intended audience is teenager themselves. Parent and teacher involvement may also be important when children

are reading this book. Discussion between teachers, parents and teenagers can be very helpful for teens build healthy attitudes and self images.

The author has written many young adult fiction books, and she is also a life long teacher, and recipient of many writing awards. Arlene Erlbach offers this humorous guide to children entering the middle school world.

Gianetti, C. C., & Sagarese, M. (1997). *The roller coaster years: Raising your child through the maddening yet magical middle school years*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

This book is a very rich and beneficial resource for parents. It's a chapter book and authors in each chapters offer a lot of practical strategies to deal certain situations. The topics include understanding middler's developing intellect and growing bodies; the emotions; their battle for independence and so on. Each topic begins with a short sharing story from other parent's experience, which may arouse a lot of similar feelings. Such daily scene can evoke reader's interest and strategies are easily to understand such as recalling your own puberty experience.

Parents can not only get information to help them understand their children better and valuable advice, but also in the reading process, parents may feel relief because of hearing so many similar stories happen in other families and feel supported.

Mosatche H.S. (2000). *Too old for this, too young for that!* Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

This book features seven chapters each of which is dedicated to survival tips for children entering puberty. All the survival tips are get used to your changing body; like the skin you're in; understand your feelings; connect with your family; find,

make, and keep friends; make the most of school; take charge of your life. Children entering puberty experience huge change in their body and emotions. They may be so curious that the needs of knowing more about themselves are increasing fast.

This book systematically offers answers towards those questions teenagers may ask. The answer includes so detailed information even like if you have braces, what you should do.

Teenagers can read this book by themselves since their existing vocabulary can be sufficient to read this book. To ask for more information when reading this book from teachers and parents can still be helpful since the school and family involvement is so important in school transition.

The author, Harriet S. Mosatche, is an experienced researcher and practitioner in youth work; also she is an award-winning author, curriculum and program developer. Dr. Mosatche provides expert advice through media and offers interactive workshops around the country. Now she serves on the American Bar Association Advisory Commission on Public Education and Commission for Youth at Risk. With her experience in youth work, Mosatche provides us an interesting book for children.