

TRAINS PROJECT PARENTS' GUIDE

2019-1-UK01-KA201-062038



FOR THE SUCCESSFUL
TRANSITION FROM PRE-SCHOOL
TO PRIMARY SCHOOL



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





TRAINS PROJECT

Transitions for all into school

2019-1-UK01-KA201-062038

Intellectual Output 3
Parents' Guide on Transition



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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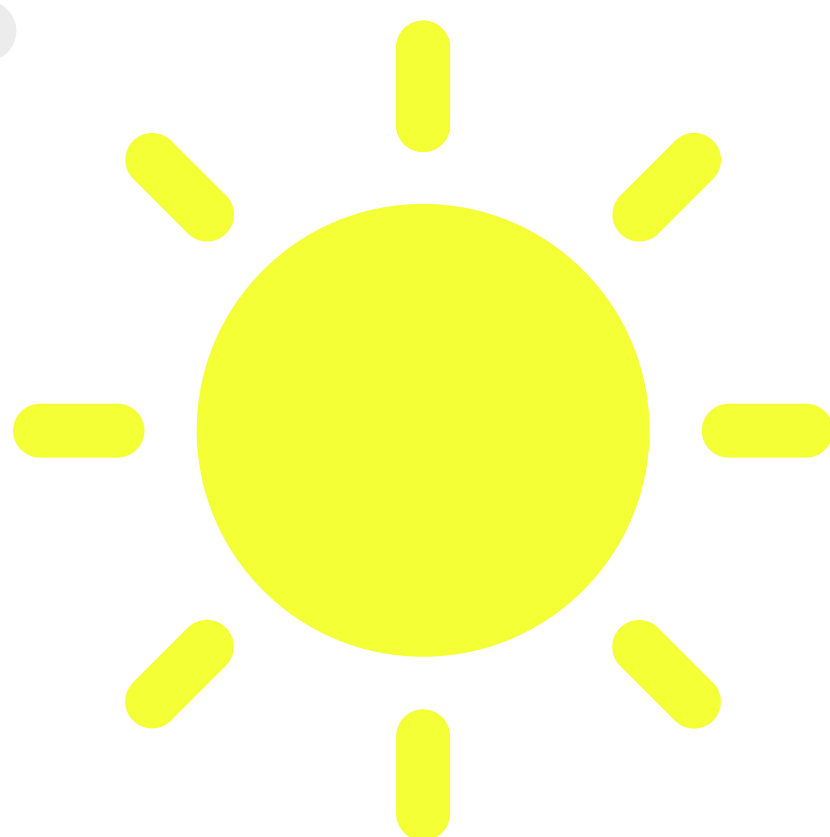
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Starting School is an important and exciting time in young children's lives and can be challenging for both parent and child. Your child transitions from a young child to a student, leaving the familiar environment of the pre-school and entering a new phase of their life defined by the school. As a parent, you can help your child develop the skills they need to be ready for school by guiding them through this transition.

Think about the changes you've seen your child have been going through in the past. When it comes to school preparation, you are naturally your child's best source of comfort and support. Use your parental intuition and experience, along with the tips in this guide, to make a smooth transition to primary school.

Getting ready for school, or transitioning, is seen as a process that takes place over time, beginning when children start to prepare for school in the home environment, continuing after they start compulsory schooling, and completed only when they have adjusted fully to school.

Let this guide be for you, dear parents, to help and support your child's harmonious transition. Here you'll find useful tips and ideas and practical advice you'll need through the process.

Remember – a positive transition is based on good emotional, social, and practical preparation.



The importance of the transition from pre-school to primary school

A transition is a process of transitioning from one condition to another and taking some time to adjust. The transition from early school to primary school is recognized as one of the most significant school transitions for young children since it represents the start of a major life change in their life. From this point forward, they will enter a new intensive period in their physical and intellectual growth, while improving previously learned routines and developing new, more complicated communication and behaviour abilities.

When you think back to your very first days at school, you may recall feelings of pride at finally becoming a student, or concerns about whether the students and teachers will be kind to you. Your child will have similar thoughts and emotions regarding going to school. Joy and curiosity are the most common emotions in children. Some children may feel uncomfortable and insecure as a result of the change, as they do with all major changes. Transitioning takes time for children, and some adjust faster than others.



Chapter 1: Introduction

As with the transition from pre-school to primary school, there are several important developmental tasks to accomplish, such as:

- Saying goodbye to some children and adults in pre-school;
- Building new relationships with children and adults at school;
- Dealing with the new expectations placed on them as young learners;
- Adjusting to a new space and daily routine at school and
- Learning to read, write and count.

Meeting these developmental demands is difficult for every child and their family. Positive coping motivates the child and moves them forward in their development.

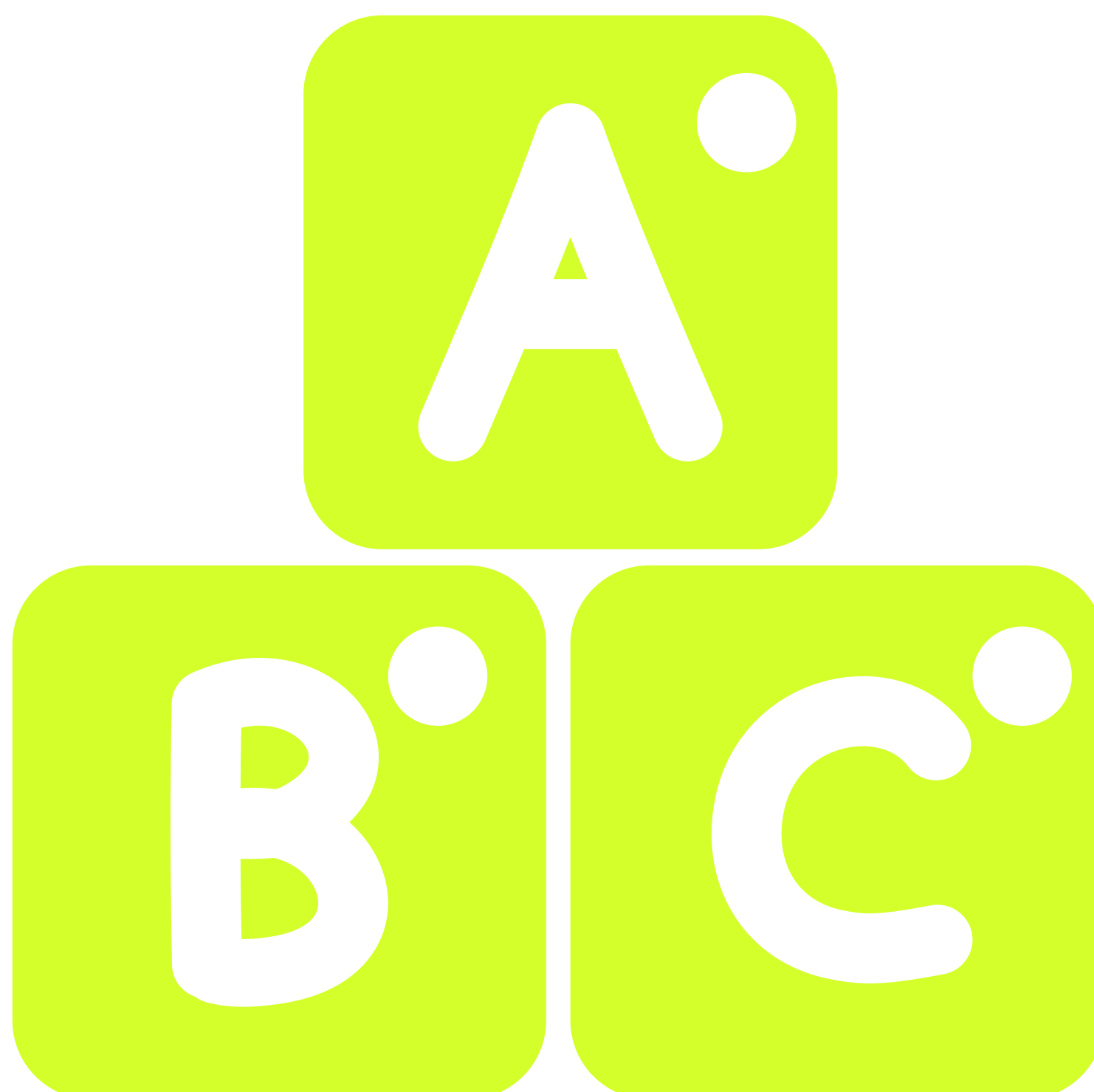
Your child has already gained experience dealing with transitional situations, such as starting pre-school or having another child in the family. Each successful transition strengthens the child's ability to deal with future changes.

Think about:

What has helped your child manage other transitions and changes in their life?

- Be mindful of how you express yourself regarding school.
- Mind that negative statements can put your child under pressure.
- Support your child and trust that they will adjust to the change.

Every day, you help to lay strong foundations for their future, so they can look forward to the start of school with joy, curiosity, and optimism....

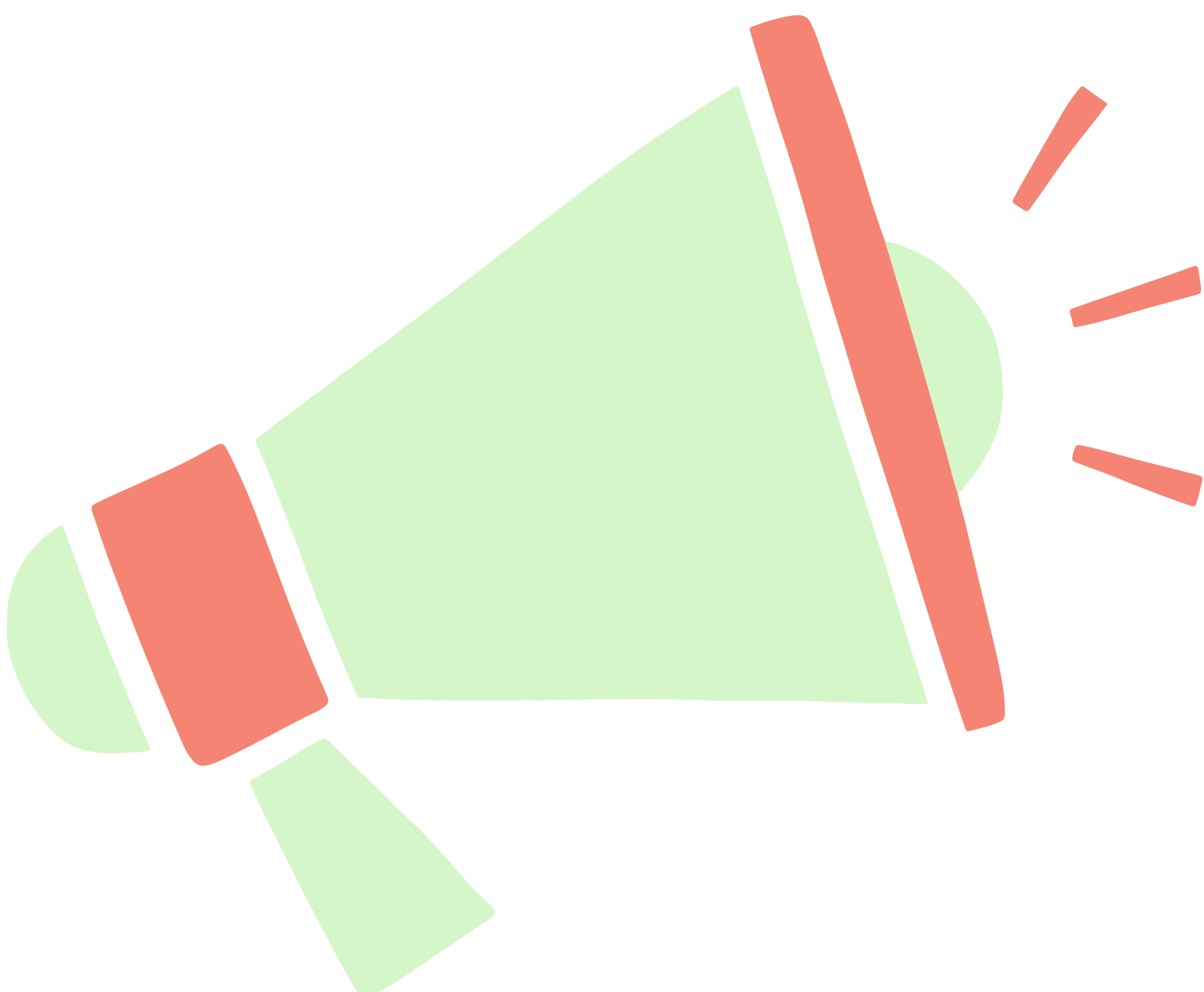


Parents' Voice

This section presents the main highlights from the survey reports conducted in the partners' countries with parents, whose children are undergoing transition.

- According to the parents in Ireland, UK, Bulgaria, Germany, visits and open events at school and parents' meetings are the activities most often employed by schools.
- The experience of the pandemic is seen by parents as having a largely negative effect on their children educationally, emotionally and socially. For most, online transition or educational opportunities are not viewed positively.
- According to the survey results, one of the main obstacles is the communication among parents, kindergartens and schools; with Covid 19 deepening the communication problem.
- Most children in the four countries surveyed attend pre-school for at least a year before starting school.
- Most of the respondents had children who started school during the pandemic, except for the England sample.
- Parents were mainly positive about the value of pre-school attendance in preparing for school.
- Evidence from England suggests that pre-schools try and arrange transition visits to school and ask Reception staff to visit children in pre-school.

- Parents are doing their best to prepare their children for school, particularly during the pandemic.
- Visits and open events at school and parents' meetings are the activities most often employed by schools.
- The experience of the pandemic is seen by parents as having a largely negative effect on their children educationally, emotionally and socially. For most, online transition or educational opportunities are not viewed positively.
- Most parents express their wish to be more involved and listened to during the transition process.



Chapter 2:

Getting your child's perspective

Initiating dialogue with your child

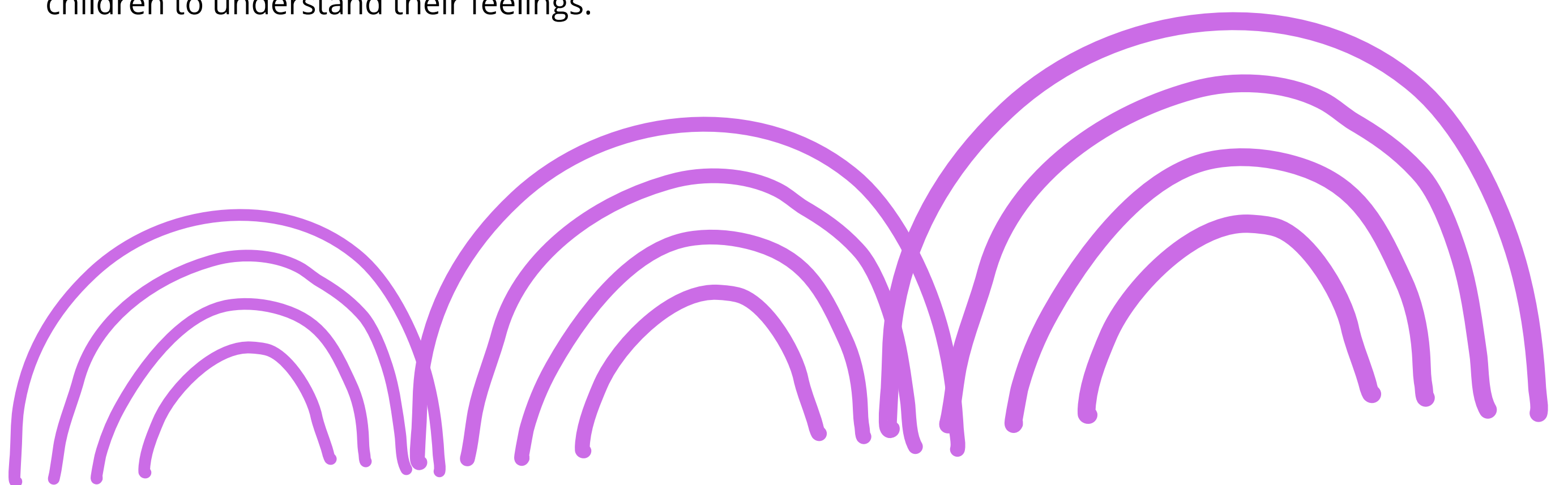
Parents play an important role in the transition of children to primary school and are indeed contributors to the process where respectful dialogue is essential. Effective transitions rely on good planning, but also good communication.

It's easy to say, "Have a conversation with your child!" but how do we get them to talk about their feelings in a way that we can understand them? At this age, children quickly forget the events of the day but continue to relive them. Their ability to narrate is still underdeveloped, so even if they feel like sharing something, they quickly get caught up in the details and give up.

Here are some tips on how to initiate dialogue with your child to understand how they are feeling:

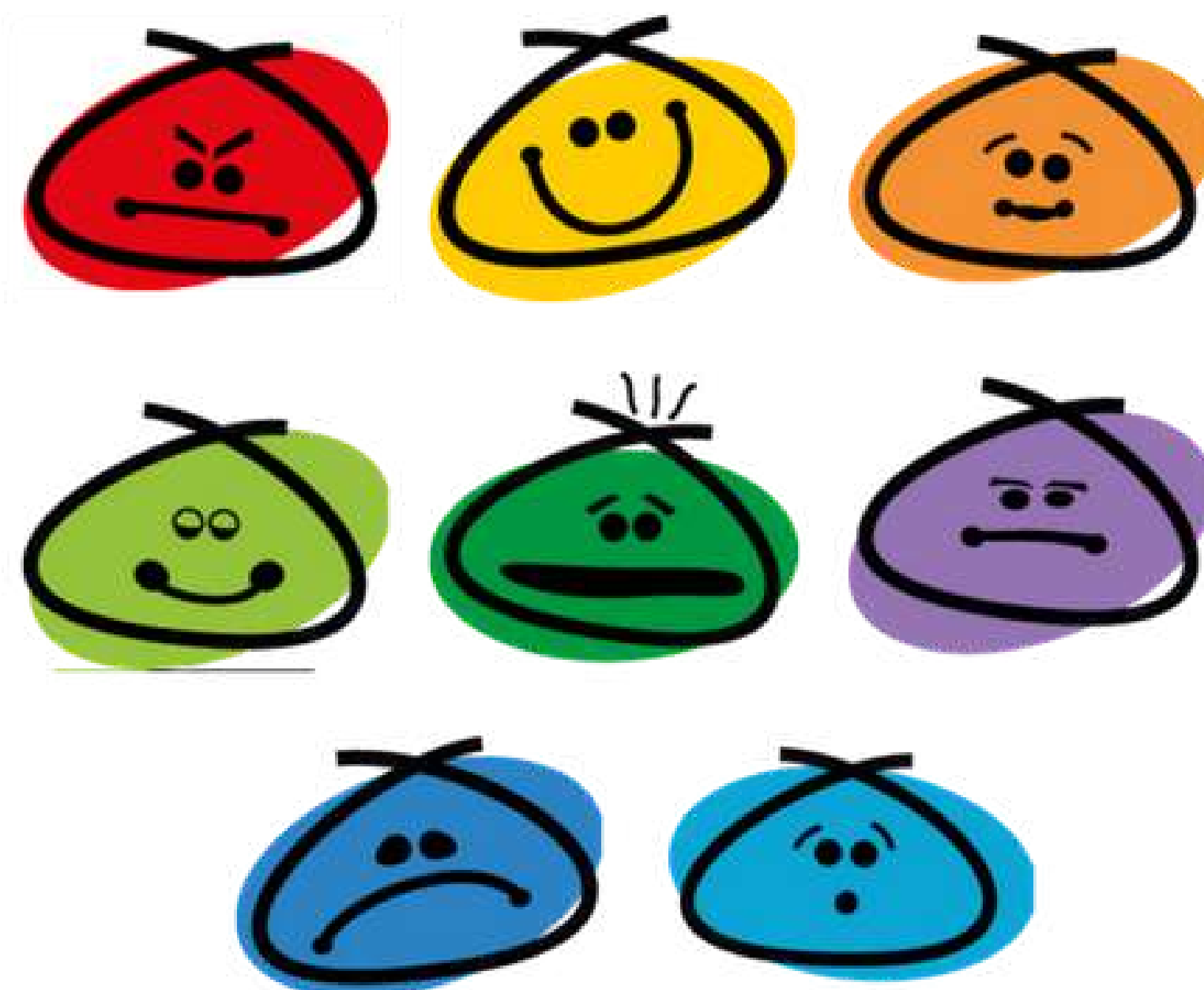
You know your child best and you already know how they might cope with the move from pre-school to primary school. Some children may like to talk about it a lot, others will not talk about it at all if so respect that. Take the lead from your child.

- Tell your child that pre-school is finishing. Help them to understand that it's normal to feel sad or lonely about this. A lot of pre-schools will have some 'ending' activities to mark this time. Talk to them about their pre-school experiences, including things they did and accomplished, friendships they had, and achievements they are most proud of. You might have a folder/portfolio of their activities from pre-school and can spend some time looking through it together over the summer.
- The beginning of all wisdom is in listening. It is important to be open to your child's point of view and to listen carefully if the child asks questions or tries to express their feelings. This will help you understand correctly what they are experiencing and feeling, their point of view, and, thus know the essence of their message.
- If the topic of school comes up during everyday activities with your child, use this as an opportunity to start a conversation. However, too much school talk may make your child feel more worried.
- Talk about and name your child's feelings to help them understand and cope with different ones (for example, "Seems like you are worried about/ afraid of ..."). Reading picture stories about feelings helps children to understand their feelings.



Chapter 2: Getting your child's perspective

- Explain that their worries such as "Am I going to find friends?" are normal and they will disappear in a few days. Remember that although concerns may seem unrealistic, they are real to your child.
 - Give them time to explain or describe events to you.
 - Avoid interrupting, give them the time and space to answer for themselves, even if you know what they are going to say.
 - Acknowledge ("I know it might be scary to go to a new place...") and reassure them that their feelings are ok ("When I was your age and I had to go to school I was also afraid, but then it passed after a few days.")
 - Avoid using baby talk.
 - Discuss the upcoming changes with your child. Children may not express their emotions verbally, but it does not imply they are not thinking about them. Ask what your child is looking forward to, what information they don't have, and what concerns they have.
 - Be aware of your behaviour. Allow your child to talk and do not speak for them.
 - Talk to your child about your school days.
- ✓ Share or make up a funny memory of your first day of school if you don't have one.
- ✓ Discuss your favourite aspects of school when you were a child.
- ✓ Make the school topics relevant to your child's interests (e.g. if your child likes sports, talk about the PE classes, etc.)
- Where possible, give your child simple information, at their level of understanding, about their concerns and questions.
 - Talking, drawing, and/or using play activities about moving to primary school can provide a sense of safety and comfort.
 - **Thank them for sharing their concerns and thinking about solving them together.**



Getting the child comfortable with going to school

Family Role Play Games

Using stories and role play games can help your child express their emotions freely and recreate events in their lives that have inspired and impressed them. Through these games, they learn how to communicate with others, develop their social skills, practice language and communicate, learn life values and develop their imagination.

You can help your child prepare for change by playing out common social scenarios they will encounter at school, for example: how to meet someone, start up a conversation, ask if they can play in a game, or ask a teacher for help.

In this way, children expand their knowledge of social relations, form interaction skills, and learn to look for solutions in different situations.

- Try playing 'school' at home – with your child acting as the teacher in charge, they can explore ideas they have what may be at school. With this insight into their expectations, you can assist with routines they might have to do- writing their name, knowing the date, days of the week, etc.

Role play "School"

Props needed: magnetic board, alphabet, numbers, marker, ring bell, notebooks, pens, cushions, pencils, toys.

Scenario. Let your child be the student at first and you the teacher. You can add dolls to create a classroom atmosphere. Use the cushions for desks. Have a conversation about why school is needed, who works there, and what the students do in the classroom. The teacher rings the bell. Then sets the tasks, that the students independently do. Another lesson, another teacher. Change your roles and let the child be the teacher. You can play out different classes -math, PE, music, etc.

- You can organize a school day on Sunday mornings, where there is a time table and the child can be a student at home. They can learn to get used to the school routine by structuring a day at home like a school day, with break times.

Other social scenarios you can play out with your child are :

- Walking to school
- Riding a school bus
- Introducing yourself in front of others
- Invite other children to play along
- Allow them to lead the way – occasionally break down your role play to allow children to take over.



Checklist for your child's readiness to go to school

There are no specific criteria and no concrete way of setting a 100% preparation rate because all children are completely different and develop at their own pace. There are also differences in their strengths and weaknesses.

Your child doesn't need to be able to write all the letters of the alphabet or read books to be ready for school!

School readiness can be defined as a child's ability to deal emotionally with a group of individuals, while being ready to learn, as well as if a child is ready to engage with other adults and children without the presence of their parents.

By the time your child is starting school, they should be comfortable doing most of the following. Use this checklist to verify to what extent your child is ready to enter the school, as well as to identify potential gaps. Please do keep in mind that this checklist is simply an indication of skills that children should have when entering school (at 4 years old), but that it is not necessary to possess them all, or that it's okay if a child is not quite there yet.



CHECKLIST

My child's readiness to go to school



SOCIAL

- My child comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend.
- My child shows interest in other children and is willing to interact with them. (plays individually and in a group).
- My child respects other children's personal belongings.
- My child doesn't need to be around an adult at all times.
- My child adapts easily to new surroundings (on a guest visit, when travelling).
- While playing with others, my child usually shares toys, takes turns and follows the rules.

SELF-CARE

- My child can button and zip their clothes, independently.
- My child can put on and take off socks, shoes, and a coat.
- My child feeds himself/herself without difficulty.
- My child can use public bathrooms independently.
- My child picks up after itself (personal belongings,, art supplies, etc.)
- My child can wash their hands, and wipe their nose.

COMMUNICATION

- My child listens and follows directions.
- My child answers simple questions such as "What is a coat for?" or "Where is the dog?".
- My child seeks help when necessary.
- My child seeks praise and admiration from others.
- My child says sentences with four or more words.

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

- My child can follow a schedule and daily routine.
- My child can follow simple instructions, e.g., take out your notebook, go get the ball, etc..
- My child moves on to new activities easily.
- My child understands and follows rules.
- My child connects actions with consequences.

SELF-REGULATION

- My child expresses feelings openly (sadness, joy, frustration).
- My child voices their needs (go to the toilet, ask for help, etc.).
- My child can listen to a story.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

- My child colours within the lines.
- My child can copy a square using a crayon.
- My child can draw a cross sign (+).
- My child can draw a person in 3 parts.
- My child can trace simple patterns.

FOCUS AND ATTENTION

- My child can stay attentive and listen attentively for short spells of time.
- My child can follow visual instructions.
- My child can narrate the content of a familiar fairy tale.
- My child can memorise and recite some words or phrases from children's songs and poems
- My child understands simple concepts like time (today, tomorrow, yesterday).

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

- My child can hop, jump, skip, and balance on one foot.
- My child can easily move, run and climb.
- My child can kick, throw and catch a ball.



Chapter 3:

Preparation for

School

Providing emotional support

Our lives are full of change, during which we transition or move from one stage to another. Moving from one learning environment to another can be an exciting time, but it can also be a cause of anxiety for you and your child.

It's natural to feel nervous about your child starting school, but remember that your child can easily pick up on your emotions. Children are naturally emotional - they recognize the slightest note of anxiety, hesitation, or tension in the behaviour of their parents. Try to be relaxed and positive, rather than showing your anxiety. Remember - The child's emotional state is more important than sticking to the details. Parents are often so caught up in the details related to the transition process that they can forget the most important thing - the emotional condition of the child.

- Avoid endless talk about school – treating it matter-of-factly rather than focusing on the “big step ahead” will help soothe an anxious child.
- Being yourself excited that your child is about to start school will send your child a more positive message that the school is something interesting that they will do well and enjoy.
- Don't over-hype school, as your little one may feel let down or mistrustful if it doesn't live up to the expectations!
- Go with them to buy new school supplies, clothing, and a backpack. The child will be more willing to use the purchased items if they participated in the selection. Let them make choices about the designs and colours that suit their personalities, for example.
- Let your child try on their new school uniform.
- Let them choose what they are going to take with them to the school.
- Read and discuss with your child stories about starting school.
- Talk about other friends who will also attend.
- During the summer, keep in contact with children you know who will be in your child's class - if possible, organize play dates or even outings together.
- As well as being beneficial for your child, it's helpful for you to be able to chat about your feelings and anxieties with their parents, who may be feeling the same.
- If you see that the children are getting along why not organize a sleepover for them.



Chapter 3: Preparation for School

The children in first grade are still under the constant supervision of the teachers, but they have more autonomy than in preschool.

Children gradually gain independence and can be left alone for a while. In this case, the best thing you can do is teach your child some basic safety rules, such as knowing their full name, parents' names, and home address, avoiding contact with strangers, and seeking help if they feel threatened.

Emphasize your child's safety. Teach them how to be careful when crossing the street, when getting on and off the school bus, and how to play safely around cars. Show them the importance of playing safely with other children and on playground equipment, for example, by avoiding falling on their neck and head.

- If you want your child to follow safety rules, you must set a good example yourself.
- While practicing walking to school with your child, create the family's walking safety rules.
- Teach your child the rules of the road and practice riding the bike route to school with your child.
- Do not call your child from across the street. When crossing the street, always choose the safest alternative.
- If your child is allowed to walk on their own, remind them to look both ways more than once before crossing streets.
- Go to the bus stop with your child to teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus. Talk to your child about school bus safety and have them practice with you.
- Teach your children to stand six feet (or 3 giant steps) away from the curb.
- Teach your child that it is important to seek the help of an adult if they receive some injury. Remind them not to apply self-help techniques like cleaning out the wound with tap water, etc.
- Tell your child never to get into a car or enter someone else's home without your permission.



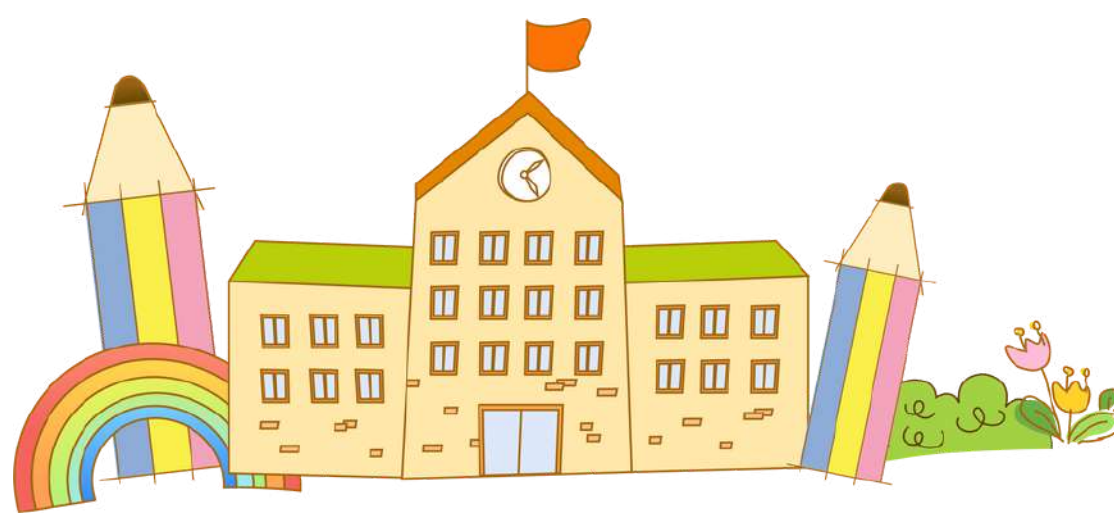
Introducing the school and the school area

A few weeks before classes, you can go with your child to the new school and find out the location of the classrooms, common places, and toilet and meet the teachers. Let your child know that teachers are there to help.

Visiting the new school with a trusted adult and with peers who will also be attending can support a positive transition by encouraging children to become familiar with their new environment from the safety of familiar surroundings.

Tips to enable your child to become more familiar with the school include:

- You can point out the building when you're passing by the school.
- You can practice the journey to school and explore the school grounds with your child on the weekends or the in the evening hours if possible.
- Your child can play on the school grounds. This will help them be more comfortable with the layout of the building and how classrooms are organised in advance. Show your child where the toilets and the drinking taps are.
- Attend any welcome days the school is holding and make sure you and your child meet the new teacher and any other school staff.
- If the school runs a home visit program, take them up on it. These are a great way for you and your child to meet school representatives in your own home.
- Attend any summer events your child's new school may be holding, such as a Sports Day or Summer Fair – take every opportunity to bring your child back to the school so they become more familiar with it
- Together, create a positive goodbye routine (e.g., a special goodbye hug, or a kind of fun gesture).
- You can choose together with your child a spot from which you will pick them up every day after school hours.



Chapter 4:

First days at School

Some children look forward to the first day of school with excitement, others with fear. However, it's great if each of them ends up having a rewarding and memorable day. After all, it is a pleasant emotion that remains for a lifetime. And if it is captured with some photos taken by the parents, it will surely be memories for the whole family.

During the first weeks at school, a first-grader learns a lot of rules and social norms related to behaviour in the classroom, assignments, and communication with teachers and classmates.

Meeting the classmates

From the very first days of school, the child is involved in the process of interpersonal interaction with classmates and the teacher. This interaction has certain dynamics and patterns of development throughout primary school age.

When your child arrives at school they will meet many children. There may be the familiar faces of friends from the neighbourhood as well as former classmates from pre-school. There will also be new faces. One of the most important tasks for the young student is to find his place among the other children with whom they communicate daily at school and especially with their classmates.

The drive to compare with peers emerges at school age. Peers can be a measure by which a child evaluates his qualities, abilities, and values. Relationships with peers will help your child to build a sense of belonging. Involvement in joint activities ensures the development of abilities and the maintenance of healthy self-esteem.

At school, your child will be managing a range of new and different relationships.

It may help your child to:

Practice first-day conversations, like introducing yourself or inviting someone to play, as the first days of school are marked with a lot of communication. For children with social skills difficulties, this may be overwhelming and frustrating.

- Be interested not only in the child's schoolwork but also in the child's new social interactions, in what happened during the day - who they played with in between classes, who they met, which children are their friends, and what are their names.
- If your child is shyer and finds it difficult to fit in with the new environment, try to give them opportunities to have contact with their classmates outside school.
- Help your child to develop the ability to stand up for oneself without hurting and offending others, and to respect them as well as their personal space.
- Discuss interactions with other students in the class, such as how we make friends and what we do when someone is rude.
- Maintain any friendships your child has with peers. They can't do this on their own; making a friend, or perhaps several, is preferable.
- You can arrange to play dates with other kids from their class to help establish friendships.
- Encourage your child to treat others politely and use magic words such as "Thank you!", "Please!", "Excuse me!", and "You're welcome!"
- Encourage physical activity by engaging in a variety of sports and leisure activities with others. These games teach social skills such as taking turns, negotiating, cooperating, playing fairly, and praising both the one who won and the one who lost. It teaches your child how to lead, follow, and function as a team member.
- Be careful not to compare your child to other children. Discussing their achievements over time is preferable.
- Teach your child that winning should not be at any cost.

Chapter 4: First days at School

Some questions that may help your child make good contact with their new peers are:

- o What name does the other child prefer?
- o Which games and personalities do they enjoy?
- o Do they have brothers and sisters?

Interaction with teacher and the teaching staff

The new relationships your child enters into at school put them in interaction with new authorities. With the start of school, authorities change. The teacher takes on an important role in your child's life. This is the time when your child expands their social horizons and may begin to feel a strong sense of attachment to another significant adult - their teacher.

Expect to hear more and more, "That's what the teacher said!" This doesn't mean that the teacher has taken your place in your child's heart. On the contrary, this indicates that your child has found another adult, in whom they can place their trust. With them, the child spends hours of self-preparation, recreation, and activities of common interest. Teachers know very well not only the child's progress but also their interests and their ability to communicate with other children.

Teachers play a key role in making your child feel comfortable at school. So try to build a partner's relationship with them. Your child would feel safer when you work together with teachers to support them.

To help your child interact smoothly with teachers during the first days in school you can:

- As a parent, you can help your child learn basic classroom etiquette that will serve them well for the rest of their lives: "Excuse me!", "May I?", "Thank you!" and "I'm sorry."
- Model good social skills for your child, for example, smiling and making eye contact. Encourage them to practice these skills with you, other family members, and friends.
- You can begin using their new teacher's name before school starts to help build familiarity.
- Whenever you talk about your child's teachers, refer to them as "Mrs Roberts" like this your child will get used to addressing them this way.
- Tell your child that if they have any concerns at school, their new teacher will assist them.
- First days at school ask the teacher how the day went, how your little learner is doing, and if they are feeling comfortable in class. Listen to the child's point of view too.
- Let your child's new teacher know about anything they need extra help with. This will allow the school and teacher to prepare and plan, and provide additional support if needed.
- Determine the best way to communicate with your child's teacher. You can offer help in organizing leisure time activities and common actions.
- Your child will feel the effects of major life events that take place in your family. Children are particularly sensitive to parental worries and distress. Family loss, a house move, and even a new pet can all be reasons for a change in one's life. Teachers should be informed. This will help them assist your child through life's events.



Chapter 4: First days at School

The school environment

There is a chance your child is concerned about getting lost in their new school. To make them feel more at ease during the first few days, try some of the following recommendations :

- During the visits before school starts, like open days and summer introduce areas like the classroom, bathroom, canteen and general office. This will help your child to be more comfortable and thus more calm and confident in the first days at school.
- Explain in advance the basic school rules and why rules are important. You must prepare your child for what will be expected of them in school.
- You can also go to the school library to check out a book, talk to the librarian, and learn about the library's rules and resources.
- Go through with your child things such as the code of conduct, dress code, canteen rules, hallway expectations and restroom behaviour.

Some examples are :

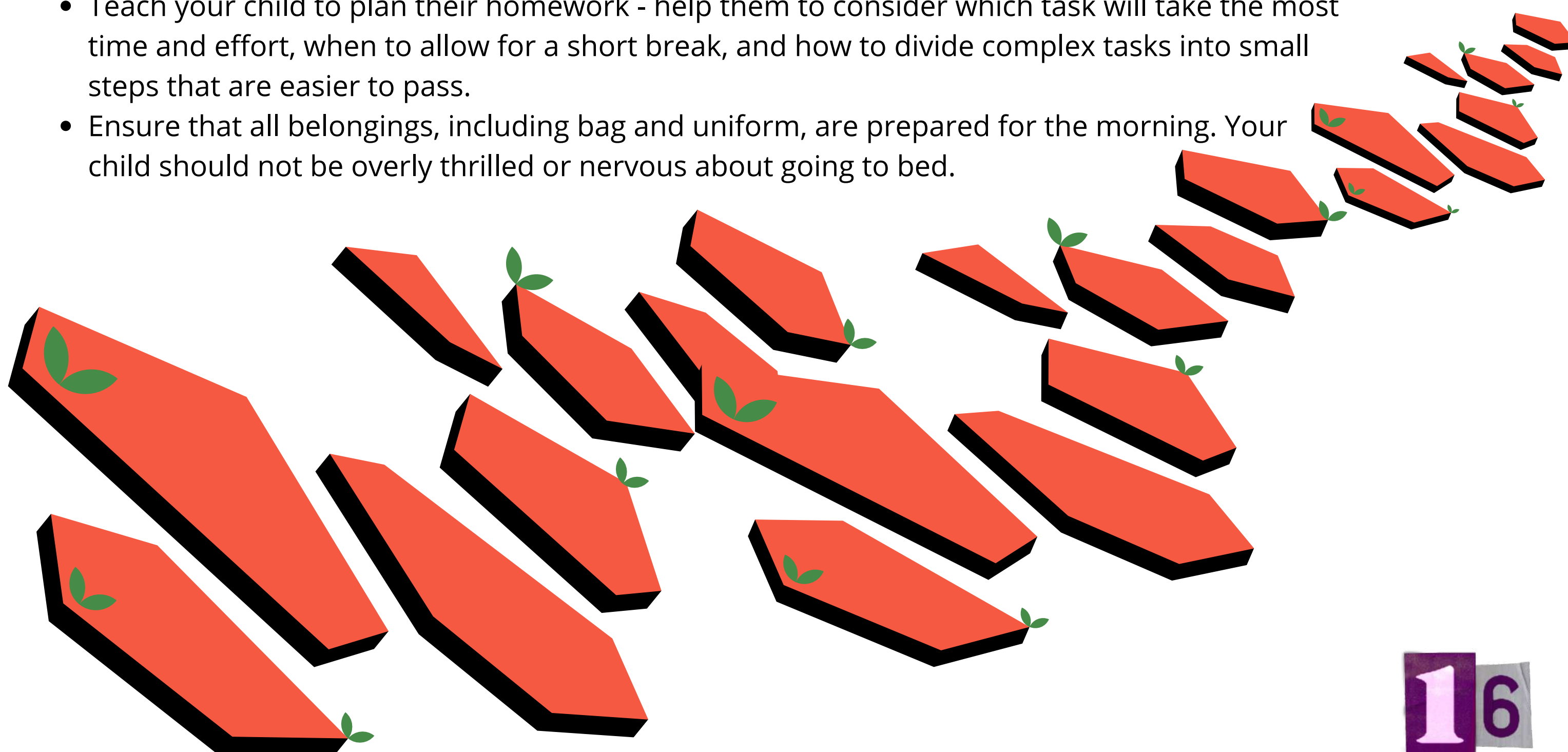
- That when they go to the canteen, they have to queue up with the other children and wait their turn.
- They must ask when they need to go to the restroom.
- Between lessons, they prepare things for the next class.
- They have breakfast at a certain time.
- Taking care of the order and tidiness in the classroom.

The school routines

A child's daily routine during the school year is determined to a great extent by their school attendance. It is challenging as in a short time children have to get used to a completely new regime, environment, and duties. Your task as parents is to support them in this process, to show them how to learn and how to plan their time. A key role in all of this is building a proper daily routine. The right one is of utmost importance for the physical and mental health of the child at this age.

Here are some tips for a healthy daily routine :

- Establish a rhythm. At first, rhythm and repetition may seem monotonous and boring, but they have their deep meaning. When they follow the same rhythm every day, children feel more relaxed. Rhythm and repetition create a sense of predictability and security in the child.
- Time management. Time is the most precious resource and the habits associated with managing it last a lifetime. Teach your child to know the clock and relate the designated activities to a specific time. For example, "On Tuesdays, I have a piano lesson".
- Teach your child to plan their homework - help them to consider which task will take the most time and effort, when to allow for a short break, and how to divide complex tasks into small steps that are easier to pass.
- Ensure that all belongings, including bag and uniform, are prepared for the morning. Your child should not be overly thrilled or nervous about going to bed.









Chapter 4: First days at School

Tips for a healthy daily routine :

- Check that all belongings, including bag and outfit, are prepared for the morning. Your child should not be overly thrilled or nervous about going to bed.
- If you wake your child a little early in the morning, it will be less stressful for both of you. Give yourself plenty of time in the morning to get ready, wash up, and have a substantial meal.
- Before the school bell rings, make sure your child is at school and has their textbooks out in front of the entire class so that it isn't disruptive.
- Explain to your youngster how a regular day is planned to make things simpler. Who will drop them off and pick them up from school, who will care for them at home, if they will attend after-school activities, what their after-school responsibilities will be, and how their after-school activities will alter.
- Create a routine that brings peace of mind and a sense of security. Everything is new and different at this time and this is a big test for more sensitive children.
- Do not be late picking up your child in the first days. For them, a wait of even a few minutes seems hours long, especially if they are feeling insecure.

Morning **ROUTINE**
bugs and beans

<input type="checkbox"/>		Get Dressed	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Eat Breakfast	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Potty	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Brush Teeth	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Back Pack/Jacket	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Go to School	

Chapter 5:

Personal Conditions

Physiological Needs

Before you can help children with their learning, self-esteem, and personal growth, you have to meet their most basic needs.

Ensuring that the child's basic physiological needs are met is essential for their development and for coping with the new tasks the school brings. They are one of the most decisive factors for the child's successful school transition. Help your child to form good eating and sleeping habits. A healthy meal and lots of sleep are essential for learning

Sleeping habits:

Fixing bedtime - a good night's sleep and sufficient rest time are essential for a healthy child.

- Set a bedtime and try to stick to it, bearing in mind that at least 9 hours of sleep is needed for your child's development and growth hormone release. This will have a beneficial effect on their biological clock and health.
- Your child should not consume large amounts of food and liquids before sleep, and should not eat too much food containing sugar (e.g. chocolate).
- Digital devices overstimulate the nervous system and disturb sleep. Don't let your child use them two hours before bedtime. Allowing them to sleep with the TV on might cause bedtime resistance, insomnia, and nightmares. It is recommended to remove the TV from your child's bedroom to make it quiet and dark.
- Establish a relaxing nightly routine for your child before bed. This could include tidying up their toys, reading bedtime stories, taking a warm bath, and brushing their teeth, this routine should last no longer than 30 minutes.
- Try to leave their bedroom before they fall asleep.
- Even on the weekends, stick to your usual sleep and waking timings.

Well-rested children perform better academically and are less likely to act out in school.



Chapter 5: Personal Conditions

Water

- Encourage your child to drink plenty of water, as it is essential for their health.
- Monitor and remind your child to take their water bottle to school every day.
- Explain to the child that fizzy drinks or sweetened drinks do not quench thirst and is better to drink water or tea when they are thirsty.

Physical wellbeing:

For health and wellbeing, school-age children need light, moderate and vigorous physical activity each day.

- Playing group sports and activities can be good for your child in lots of ways.
- Physical activity can include everyday activities like walking and energetic play.
- Introduce physical activity into your family life - go for a family walk after dinner, take a hike in the mountains on the weekends or visit a swimming pool.
- Improve their body control and coordination by encouraging them to run, jump, climb, catch, draw, and sort little things.

Going to the toilet

Many children tend to hold their pee during school hours! Apart from the temporary inconvenience, this can also lead to serious health problems.

- Support your child to be confident about getting to the toilet in time.
- Make sure that they have tissues and dry and wet wipes, and they know how to clean themselves after using the toilet.
- Children do sometimes wet themselves in the first few months of school. Tell your child that this is just a mistake that can happen to anyone. Advise them to tell the teacher about such situations, should they happen again.
- If your child is facing such a problem put in their backpack an extra change of clothes.



Personal Hygiene

By the time they reach Year 1, most children are taking a much more active role in their hygiene. However, parents should remain involved and supervise them.

Health and hygiene must be taken very seriously because at school your child will be in close contact daily with many other children.

- Make sure that your child understands the importance of washing hands and the connection between cleanliness and staying healthy.
- Make it a habit for your child to wash their hands frequently: right after they've used the restroom, after a sneeze, coughing or blowing their nose, and after being around ill people
- Teach your child to put used tissues in the bin.
- Remind your child that they may not always have access to running water, but they could use wet wipes or liquid disinfectants.
- Remind your child not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Make hand washing fun for kids by making up a song and having them wash their hands for a sufficient amount of time.



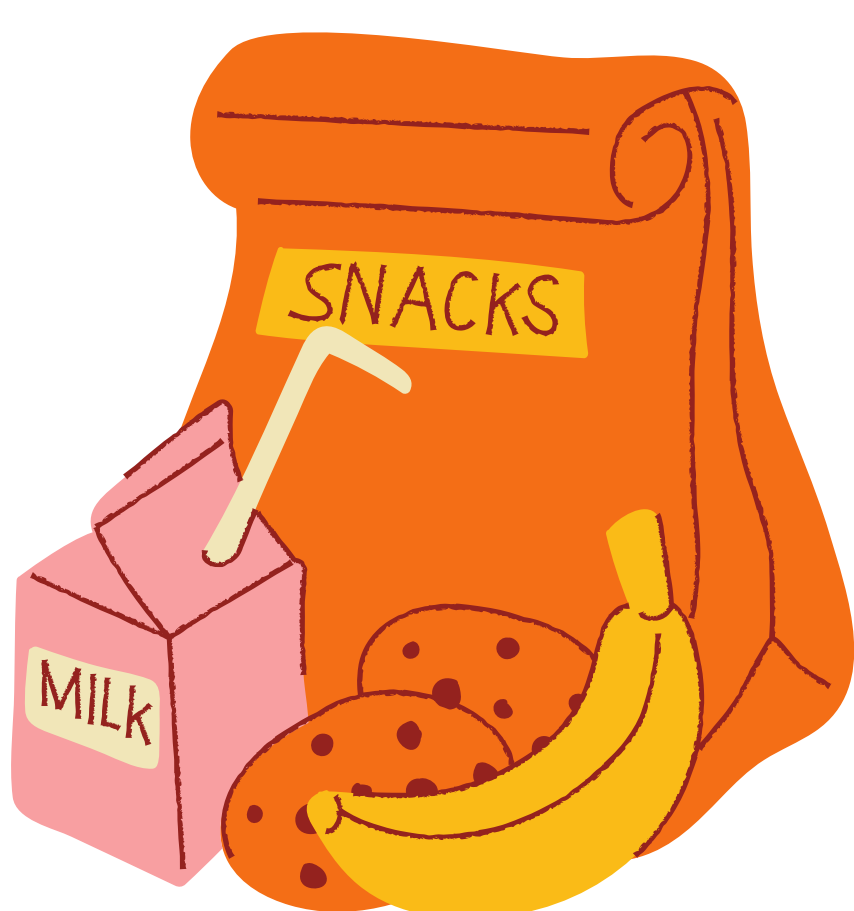
Chapter 5: Personal Conditions

Food, snacks, lunchtime

- Make sure your child has something to eat and drink during the morning and lunch breaks, if they do not already receive hot meals and snacks in school.
- Pick a lunch box and a bottle that are easy to open and close. It's easier and safer to drink from a carton than from a bottle. Again, keep in mind they can fit in the school bag.
- Your child can practice using the lunch box at preschool, or during a picnic lunch at home or in the park.
- Make sure your child has enough healthy food for both recess and lunch.
- It's best if you have a range of colours. It will not only make the lunchbox visually pleasing, but it will also add a wide variety of nutrients.
- Pack familiar meals and provide food your child can easily open or unwrap.
- Include a personal message that can brighten their day or make them smile.
- Prepare food together with your child. When they've invested emotion and creativity, they are much more likely to eat with greater enthusiasm.
- To make eating more enjoyable for your child you may use some creative techniques like cutting fruits and veggies into shapes like stars and hearts, or preparing the sandwich with a smiling face.
- Make sure you have more healthy products in the house and make it easy for your child to see and reach them.
- Don't use food as a bribe or reward.
- When you provide your child with a healthy food environment at home, they will learn how to make healthier choices when eating out.

Personal belongings

- Allow your child to take only a few personal items with them to school.
- Design strategies for organizing personal belongings and have a consistent order for each belonging.
- Write your child's name on their clothing and other things like their lunch box and water bottle.
- A transparent pencil case can be useful so that the child can easily find the pens, pencils etc.
- Precious items, must not be brought into school. Do not let your child carry a lot of cash, valuable objects, or other items not recommended by the school.
- When something is missing, teach your child to stay calm, and not get angry or upset. Ask them to seek help from teachers or other staff immediately, and try to look around carefully for the items again.
- Do not immediately replace everything they've lost, and instead focus on teaching them responsibility for their possessions. Keep reminding your child to be careful with their belongings (even with sticker labels, their items may never return).



Chapter 6:

Support for parents in managing transition and coping with the challenges

Dealing with feelings and emotions:

Children are generally adaptable and flexible, but keep in mind that during the transition period, biological and social fears arise and can absorb a large portion of their energy, leading to a variety of difficulties.

Even if they attended a preparatory group, your child will be confronted with a whole new set of rules which will be in contrast to their daily routine at home and the order in the preschool.

As the child's horizons expand, so do their fears.

Many children exhibit a strong fear of ridicule, irony, and, in general, the opinions of others when they are in primary school. Fears of being late, making mistakes, breaking rules, and being scolded emerge as well. Some children may appear painfully shy as if they are afraid to make a mistake. Others demonstrate anxiety in the face of adult expectations.

If you notice that your child is having unusual difficulties, you should consider increased stress and difficulty in adaptation.

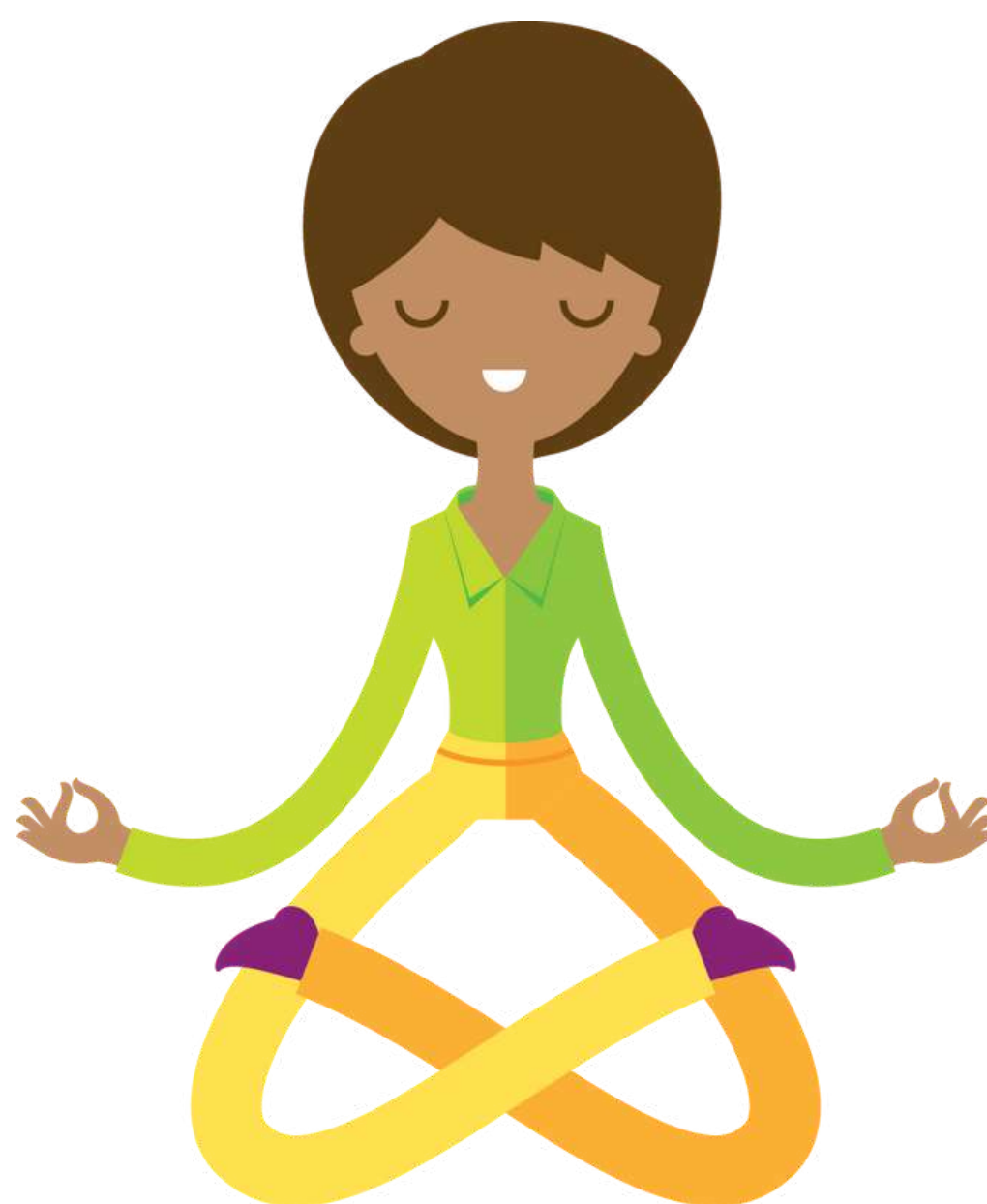
These signals may first come from your child's teacher or tutor, who spends many hours with them and observes their behaviour directly. Do not neglect these signs, but work together to identify the source of the difficulties and restore the child's joy of learning.

There may be more masked signs to look out for, such as:

- Mood swings (unforeseen crying or becoming upset/angry more quick),
- Loss or increase in appetite,
- Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling and staying asleep; repeated nightmares),
- Decrease motor activity, or some children may refuse to speak or use the toilet facilities at school.

Some children may also experience somatic problems such as:

- Tummy ache
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Constipation



Chapter 6: Support for parents in managing transition and coping with the challenges

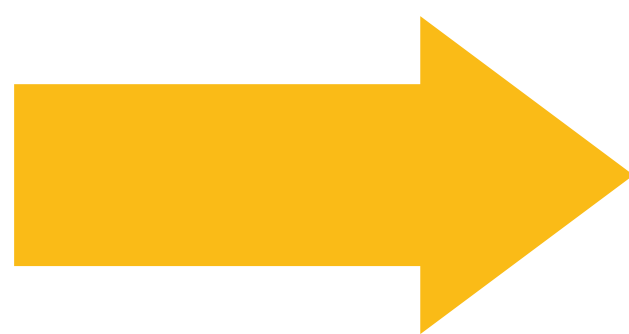
Here are ideas for managing mixed feelings:

- Listen to and observe your child to determine whether they are at ease, whether they are eager to discuss what is going on, and whether they are willing to go to school.
- Knowing how your child feels about the school can help you catch problems before they get out of hand, so you can help your child do well.
- Some children may refuse to go to school, cry, and have a tough morning. Listen to your child calmly and find out what they are scared of without revealing your concern. Demonstrate your belief in their ability to cope and rely on your assistance. Reassure them.
- During or after transition, children of all ages may experience regressive tendencies for a few days or weeks. They may exhibit behaviour that they have previously outgrown, such as temper tantrums, thumb sucking, or bedwetting.
- Allow your child to ask questions and answer them honestly.
- Drawing, painting, and dancing allow children to express what they are excited or concerned about.
- For the emotional comfort of the young child, reading a book by the parent before sleep may help, even when the child is already adept at this process.
- Some children feel their school experiences are private, so they might not want to share them. This is a typical part of school-age development as children start to shape their own identities and social worlds. But your child still needs to know you're available when they're ready to talk.
- In the beginning, children may require emotional support and rest. Before adding afterschool activities, let your youngster adjust to school. Keep the first few weekends quiet, as they may need time to recharge, much like when we start a new job or a huge project. Plan some quiet time after school. Your child's activities may include peaceful play or something energetic. Do what works for your child.
- Establish boundaries which do not vary over time. All children have desires and preferences, but it is not recommended to fulfil them all and on the spot. Yet, wishes are acceptable, but certain behaviours are not. It is important for you as a parent to remain composed, clear, and assertive. "I understand you want to play more, but you must get a good night's sleep before going to school. It's time for bed."

This is the main mechanism which you can follow as a parent to deal with the feelings and emotions of your child in the transition process.

- It is important to distinguish between the child's natural need to adapt and the difficulty in adapting due to mental development factors.
- When such difficulties occur, it is advisable to seek psychological support to find the most appropriate approach for the individual child

Listen
Observe
Determine
Discuss
Comfort



proactive
emotional
support

Chapter 6: Support for parents in managing transition and coping with the challenges

Coping with changes in the new situation for the family

Starting school is not only a change for your child. Alongside the preparations and excitement, it's important to take some time to think about how this change will affect you and your family. Having your child start school may lead to a new routine for the whole family.

- Remember that once your child starts school you will assume new responsibilities, like supervising your child's homework, checking the school backpack and preparing a lunchbox, etc.
- Be prepared and allocate enough time to do these new tasks.
- Remember to be mindful that if you don't have enough time for your new duties you may feel stressed and overloaded.
- A clear plan for each day for the forthcoming week including a schedule will help you to be more organized and calm.
- If you have other children in the family, they too may be experiencing a mix of emotions about their brother or sister starting school. It is important to monitor their reactions and consider what they may need during this time.
- If you do have any concerns, raise them early to prevent them from developing into bigger problems.
- Sometimes you may feel like you are losing control over your daily situations. In such moments, you can look out for socializing opportunities where your family can build relationships with other families throughout the school year.
- Do not forget that your child is maybe aware of what you are feeling and this can influence their reaction to school.

Useful Online Resources



- Resources for parents from a children's charity organisation <https://spurgeons.org/resources-for-parents/top-tips-for-school/>
- Resources for parents from a mental health charity <https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/getting-ready-to-start-primary-school/>
- Lots of resources here from the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/being-school-ready/>
- Guide for parents in Northern Ireland <https://www.parentingni.org/blog/parents-guide-school-transitions/>
- Hertsforlearning transitions toolkit - includes a transitions audit as well as guides for parents, practitioners and children <https://www.hertsforlearning.co.uk/leadership-and-management/early-years-improvement-services/supporting-smooth-transitions>
- Guidance from The Scottish Government <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-child/transitions/starting-school>
- Nursery World magazine <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/home-learning-a-parent-s-guide-to-transitions>
- Scottish parents' pack https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/227/transition_pack_from_nursery_to_primary_school
- Parent organisation <https://www.theschoolrun.com/5-things-you-must-do-get-your-child-ready-primary-school>
- Parent organisation <https://www.madeformums.com/school-and-family/starting-school-your-essential-guide/>
- <https://www.npc.ie/news-events/transition-from-pre-school-to-primary-school>
- <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05212-NCSE-Resource-7-Transitioning-03.pdf>
- <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Going-on-the-School-Bus-Ready-to-Edit.pdf>
- <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Communication-Pasport-Template.pdf>
- <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/10-Day-Countdown-to-School.pdf>



Chapter 7:

Transition Testimonials

Testimonials from UK 

Oliver

“

Oliver is a 4 year old boy. He lives with his mum and younger brother. Oliver went to a private day nursery prior to starting in the school Reception class.

Prior to starting at school, Oliver's new teacher, Miss Martin visited him at his day nursery. She spoke to his key person Ben, who told her about Oliver's interests and development over the past year. Ben knew Oliver very well and in addition to talking informally about his progress, he shared his assessment data with Miss Martin. Ben asked Miss Martin if she could bring a transition pack to the Nursery, with a school jumper and book bag. He also asked the teacher about their approach to learning at the new school.

After Miss Martin had left, Ben set up a school role play area in the nursery. He added school jumpers from the transition schools as well as book bags, other forms of school uniform, books about transition and school resources such as pens and workbooks. Ben and the other staff played with the children in the school role play area during the summer term. The children's favourite activity was "taking the register" which involved one of the children pretending to be the teacher and call out the other children's names.

The school arranged a transition afternoon for all the children starting in Oliver's class. Oliver's mum stayed with Oliver for this session, playing with him in the construction area. Oliver's mum made friends with one of the other parents and arranged for Oliver and the other child to play together over the summer holidays. Oliver's mum also spoke to Miss Martin, asking her about settling in. She was worried because Oliver had found the transition into nursery quite hard but Miss Martin was able to reassure her that the transition would be gradual, giving Oliver time to settle.

When Oliver started on the first day at school, he visited for 1 hour with his mum and then went home. The second day he stayed for a little longer and his mum sat with some of the other parents outside the classroom. On the third day, Oliver's mum explained that she was going to go home and would pick him up at lunch time. Once Oliver had stayed alone for a few days, he began to stay for the whole day. This gradual admission supported Oliver in getting used to the new environment and leaving his mother. Oliver has now settled very well and has formed new relationships with the other children.

”

Chapter 7: Transition Testimonials

Testimonials from UK

Ramona



Ramona is a 4 year old Roma girl. She lives with her parents, her 7 brothers and sisters and her oldest sister's husband and daughter in a terraced house in the north of England. Romana's family moved to the UK 5 years ago from the Czech Republic. Ramona speaks Romani at home and can also speak some English and Czech.

Prior to starting in the school Reception class, Ramona's parents found out about transition practices through a Youtube video recorded in the Romani language by a cultural liaison worker at the school. This video gave some key information about the school including details of school uniform, a typical school day and paperwork which needed to be completed.

Ramona visited the Reception class in the summer term prior starting to meet the staff and familiarise herself with the school. Her mum and younger brother and sister visited the school together for a "stay and play" session. Ramona enjoyed playing in the sand outside with her new teacher, Mrs Price, and her siblings. Mrs Price spoke to Ramona's mum with the help of the cultural liaison worker, Maria, who translated. Ramona's mum had been worried about sending her child to school as in the Czech Republic, children do not start school until a later age. Maria was able to reassure her that her daughter would be safe and well cared for at school. They started to form a professional relationship at this initial meeting as they both came from the same community and shared their Roma values.

As well as a visit to the school, Mrs Price and Maria also visited Ramona's family in their home during the summer term. Maria translated for Mrs Price, explaining what would happen on the first days at school. She also shared information about the community support offered by the school such as a uniform exchange and food bank. Mrs Price was able to observe Ramona playing at home with her younger siblings. She noticed that they preferred to play outside. On Ramona's first day at school, Mrs Price showed Ramona the outside area and explained with Maria's help that she could play outside whenever the doors were open. Maria stayed with the Reception class for the first few weeks as the children settled in. There were several other Roma children in Ramona's class who she knew from the community. Ramona settled in quickly and began to play with her Roma friends. She also made friends with a Polish girl, using her knowledge of Czech to communicate with her. Ramona spoke Romani to Maria and the other Roma children at the beginning of the year but is now beginning to communicate in English and to make friends with her English speaking classmates.



Testimonials from Republic of Ireland



Aoife



Aoife is a 4-year-old girl who started school in September. She attended pre-school for one year, where she impressed the staff with her social and emotional development, as well as her fine motor skills. Though her two older siblings didn't start primary school until they were 5-years-old, Aoife's parents felt that their daughter was ready to take the leap to formal schooling. However, before making this decision, they consulted their daughter's pre-school teachers, as they believed that the opinion of the educators who have spent so much time with Aoife over the last year is very important.

They also asked Aoife about how she feels about going to "big school" and while the little girl expressed her excitement about learning in a new building and meeting her new teacher, she was worried that she would struggle to make new friends. Aoife's parents reassured her that not only would some of her classmates from pre-school be entering primary school at the same time as her, but that she would be meeting lots of new children who will also want to make new friends. To reassure her further, Aoife's parents set up a playdate with her best friend from pre-school, Zoe. During the playdate, the girls' parents encouraged them to talk about the new school and made sure that the girls understood that they will be facing this big change together.

Now, a month into the new school year, Aoife loves her new school. She is still friends with Zoe, but has also met and befriended many other boys and girls. When asked about her experience of the first few days in primary school, Aoife always mentions how glad she was to have her best friend Zoe by her side, especially when she felt nervous about meeting new children. The girls supported each other through the transition, and now feel comfortable enough to play and spend time with other children in the class.



Sam

Sam is a 5-year-old boy who just made the transition from pre-school to primary school. The beginning of this process was difficult for Sam as he felt very nervous about leaving the comfort and familiarity of the pre-school behind. Often, when his parents or teachers tried to talk to him about the upcoming change, he would cry or try to change the subject.

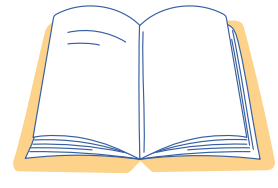
His parents worried that Sam wasn't ready for school, and decided to speak to his pre-school teachers about how best they could prepare him for the transition. His teachers suggested that Sam's parents introduce the topic of the transition to him gradually, firstly discussing it at home and including stories of their good times at school, then visiting the school and making sure that Sam is familiar with the new building and his new teacher. His parents decided to make the transition as fun as possible, and made sure that Sam was included at every step of the way, by bringing him shopping for school books and utensils, meeting up with new classmates and letting him try on his uniform a couple of times before the first day of school.

With time, Sam got used to the idea of going to "big school" and slowly became more curious about the transition. He began asking his parents questions about what his day will look like in the new school and even told his grandparents that he was very excited to meet his new teachers.

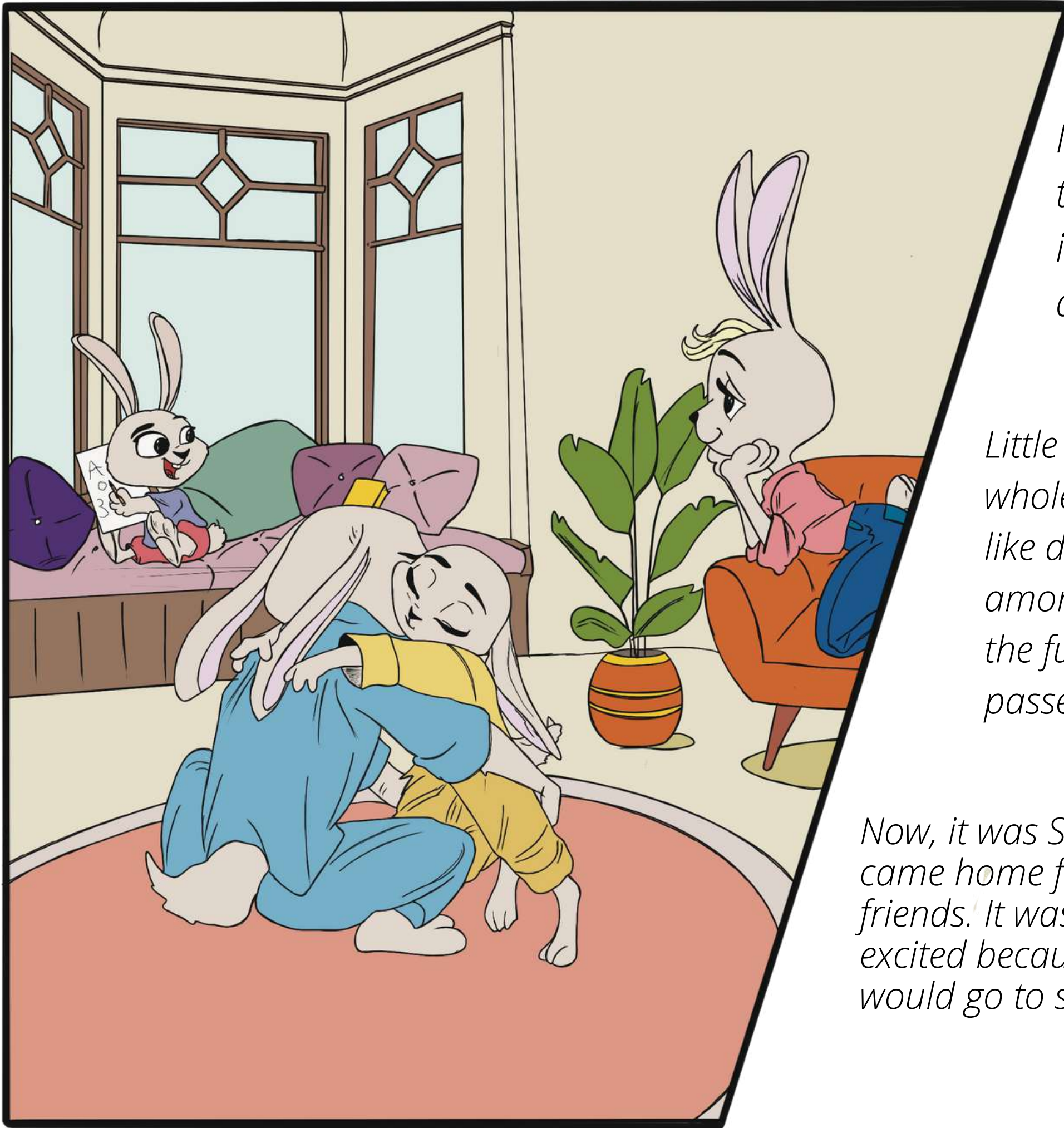
Sam has attended primary school for three months now while he was a little shy during his first week, he has now come out of his shell and loves going to school. He mostly enjoys lunch time when he gets to play football with his new friends.



LITTLE BUNNY GOES TO



SCHOOL A short story



In a leafy green forest at the bottom of the tall mountains, lived the Little Bunny in a warm, cosy den with Mama Rabbit and Papa Rabbit.

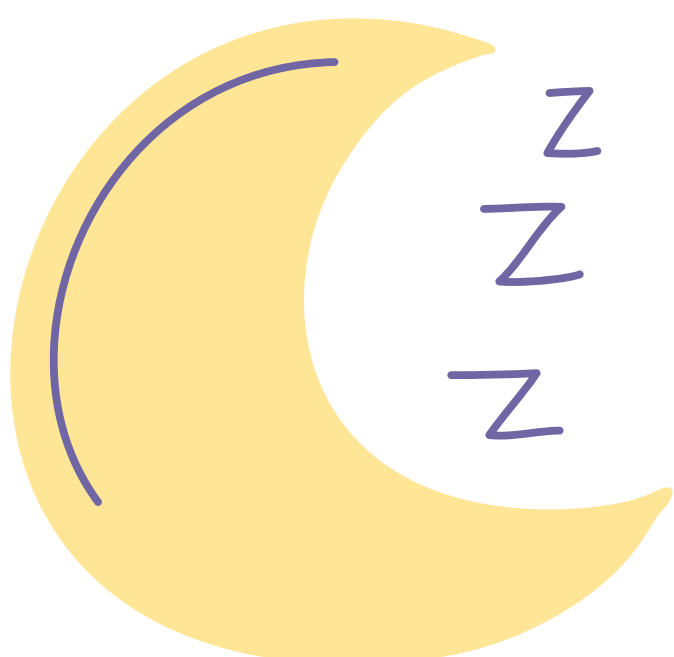
Little Bunny and his forest friends spent the whole summer playing their favourite games, like digging tunnels and hide and seek among the beautiful flowers and bushes. But the fun and adventure of the summer quickly passed...

Now, it was Sunday evening, and the Little Bunny came home from another forest playdate with his friends. It was getting late, and the Bunny was very excited because tomorrow was a special day — he would go to school for the very first time!

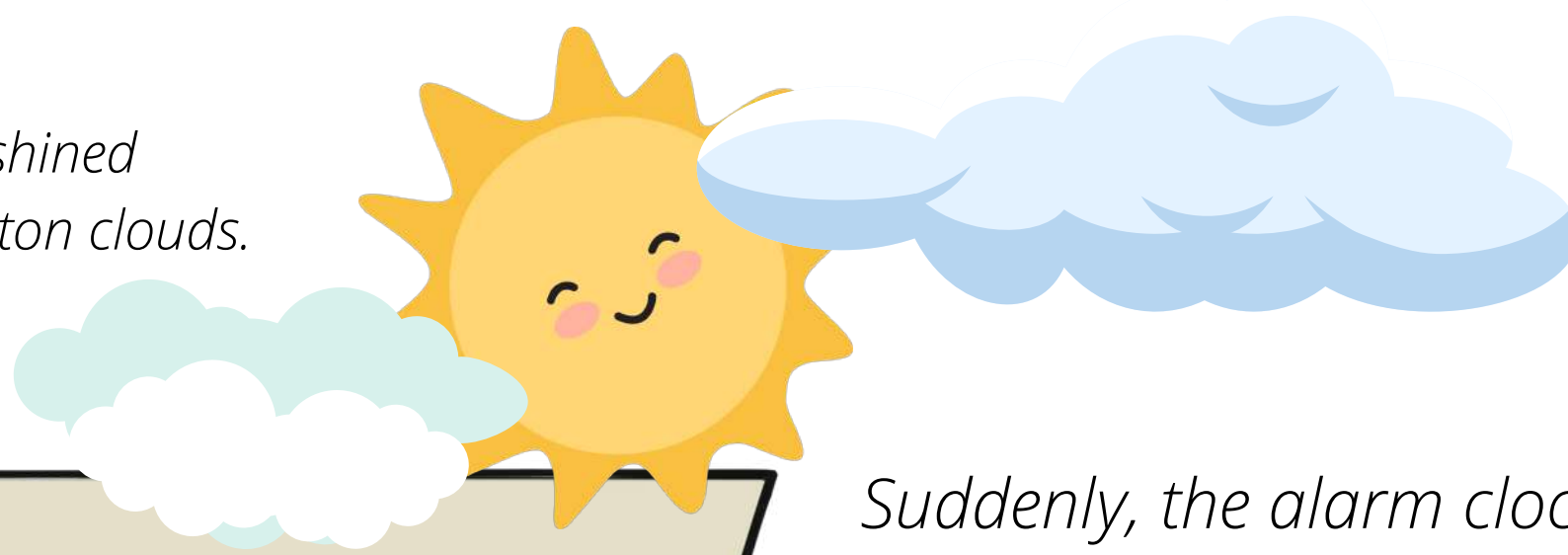
Little Bunny neatly packed his backpack full of books, pencils, notebooks, and of course, his favourite plush duckie. Little Bunny also placed his new uniform on the chair next to the bed, all ready to wear in the morning.

“Time to get ready for bed, darling!”, said Momma Rabbit.

After putting on his pyjamas and brushing his teeth, Little Bunny jumped into his soft bed, and thinking about the next day, quickly fell asleep. .



Morning came and the sun shined brightly behind the puffy cotton clouds.



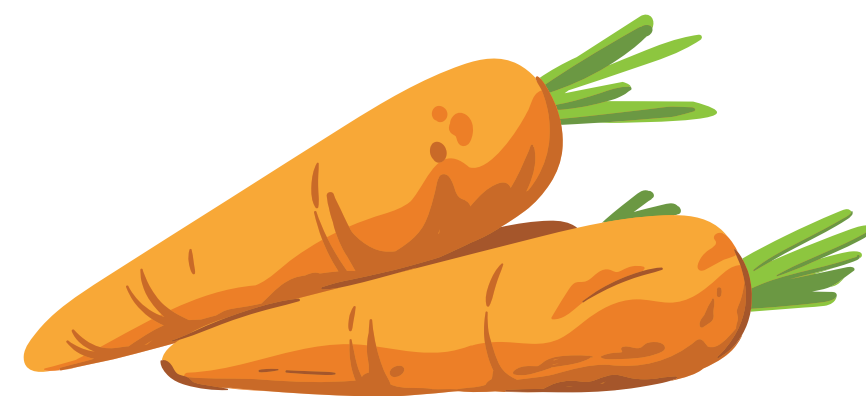
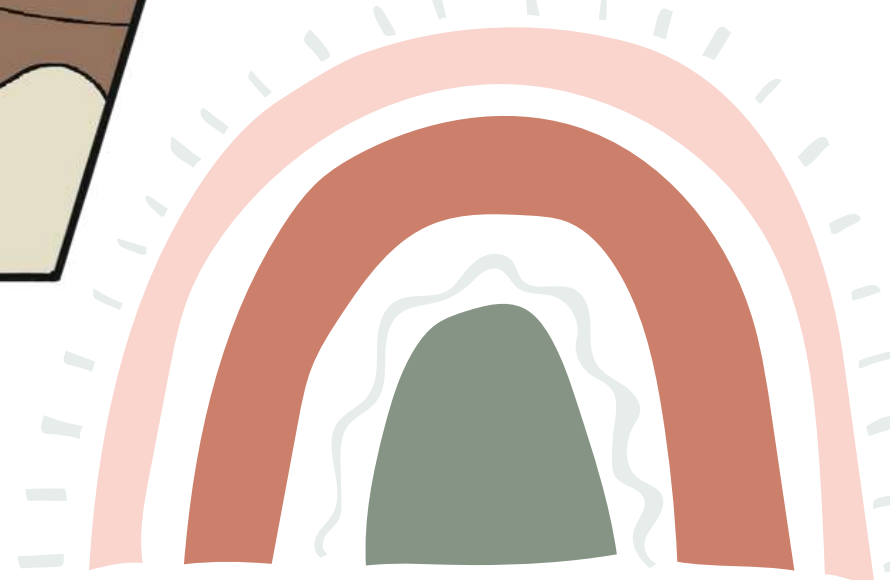
Suddenly, the alarm clock rang...



Little Bunny stretched out in his warm bed and thought "**Hurrah, today is the day I become a pupil at the Forest school!**".

He was full of excitement and energy, and hopped out of bed to get ready. When Momma Rabbit went into the room to wake him up, he was already dressed!

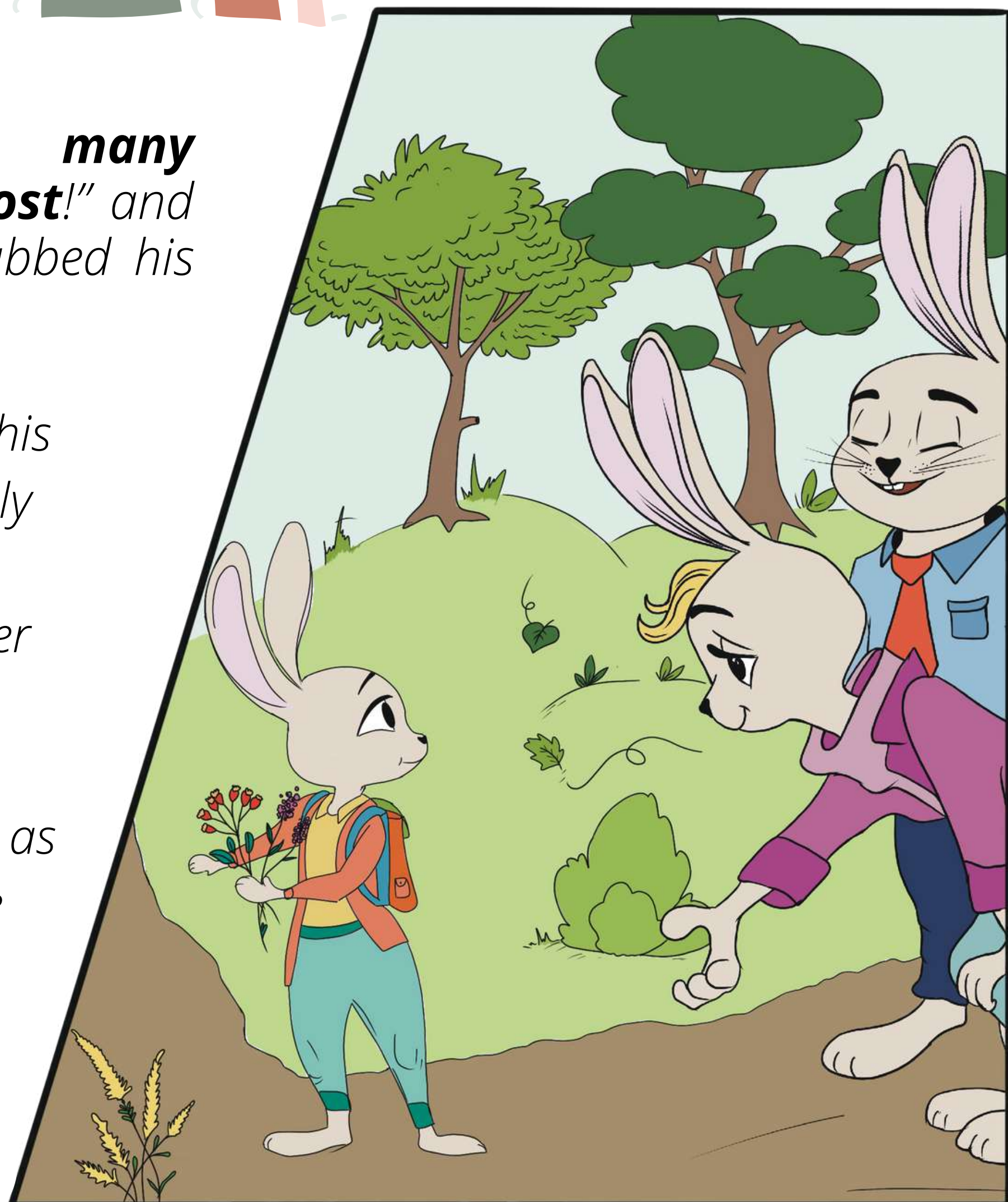
After a delicious carrot breakfast, the whole family headed to the Forest School which was already full of pupils.



Little Bunny thought: "**So many children, I'm going to get lost!**" and at that moment he firmly grabbed his Momma's hand.

Among the crowd, Mrs. Deer, his teacher, approached the family with a big smile.

Little Bunny hugged his mother and father goodbye and, together with the teacher, he walked towards the class. Just as the first school bell rang, Little Bunny walked bravely to the classroom...





The Forest students took their seats and Mrs. Deer asked them all to introduce themselves and tell the others what they would like to learn at school.

The first to speak was the Hedgehog who raised his hand.

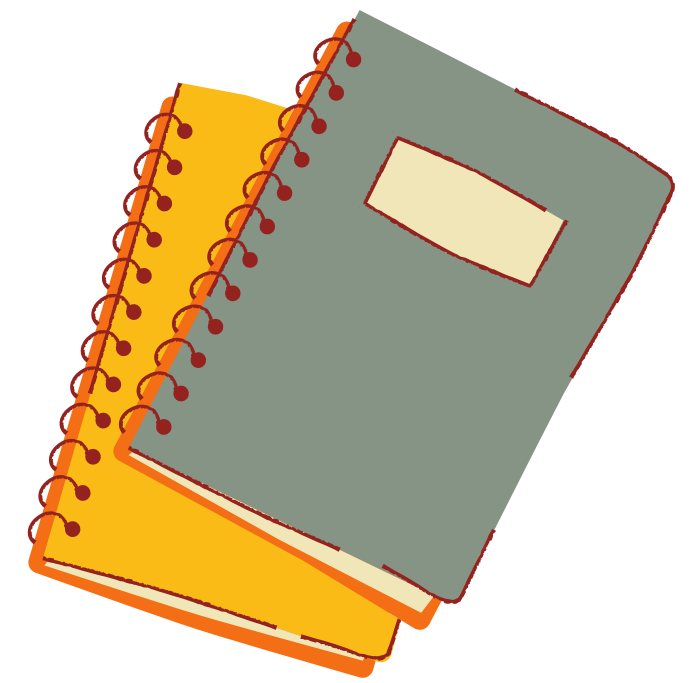
"I am Hedgehog and I love to draw. Here I will learn how to paint pretty pictures of the most beautiful parts of the forest!"

Next, the ant raised her hand and said:

"I'm Ant, and I want to learn how to collect and count the smallest little things, so that I can become the Queen of the Anthill."

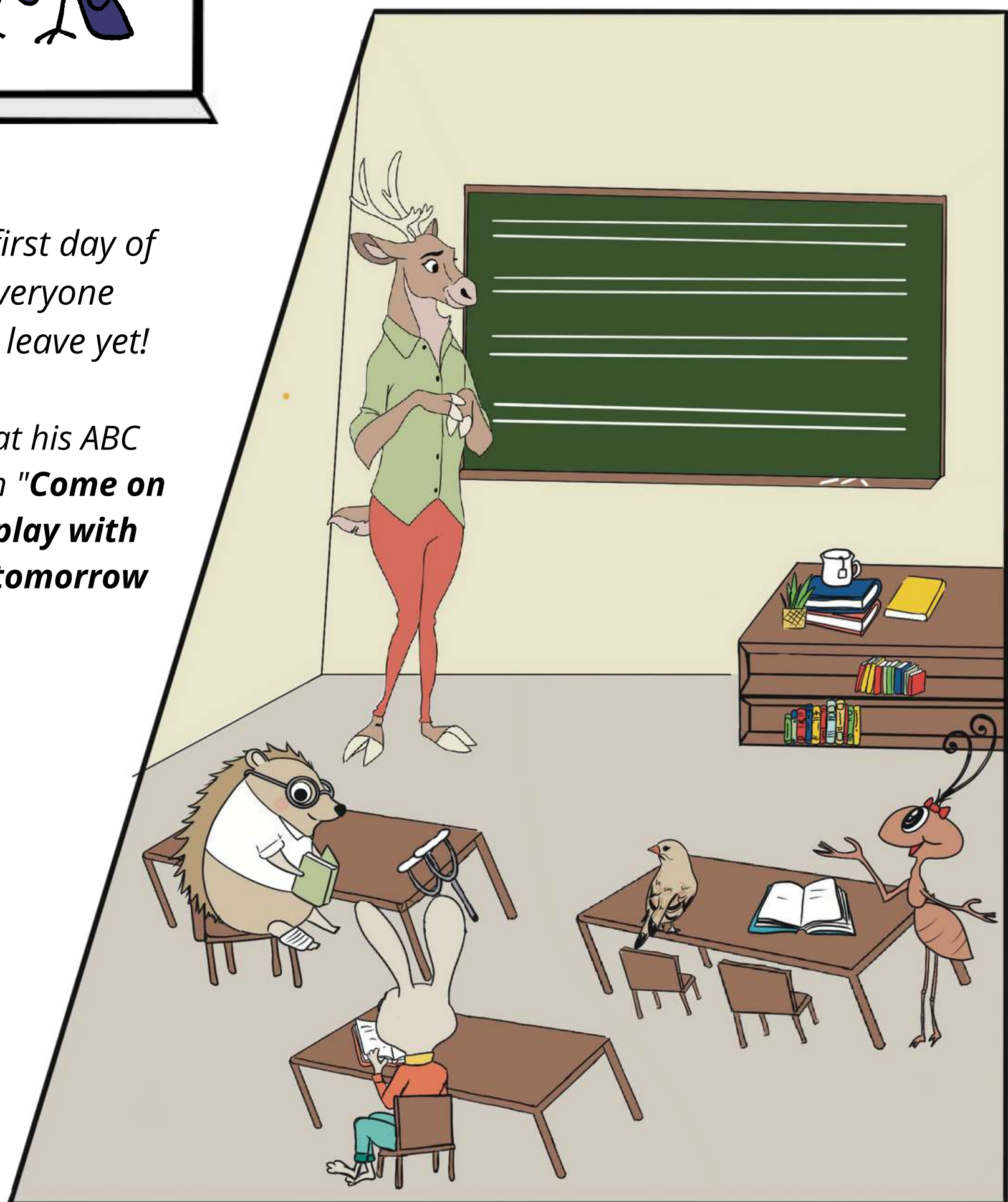
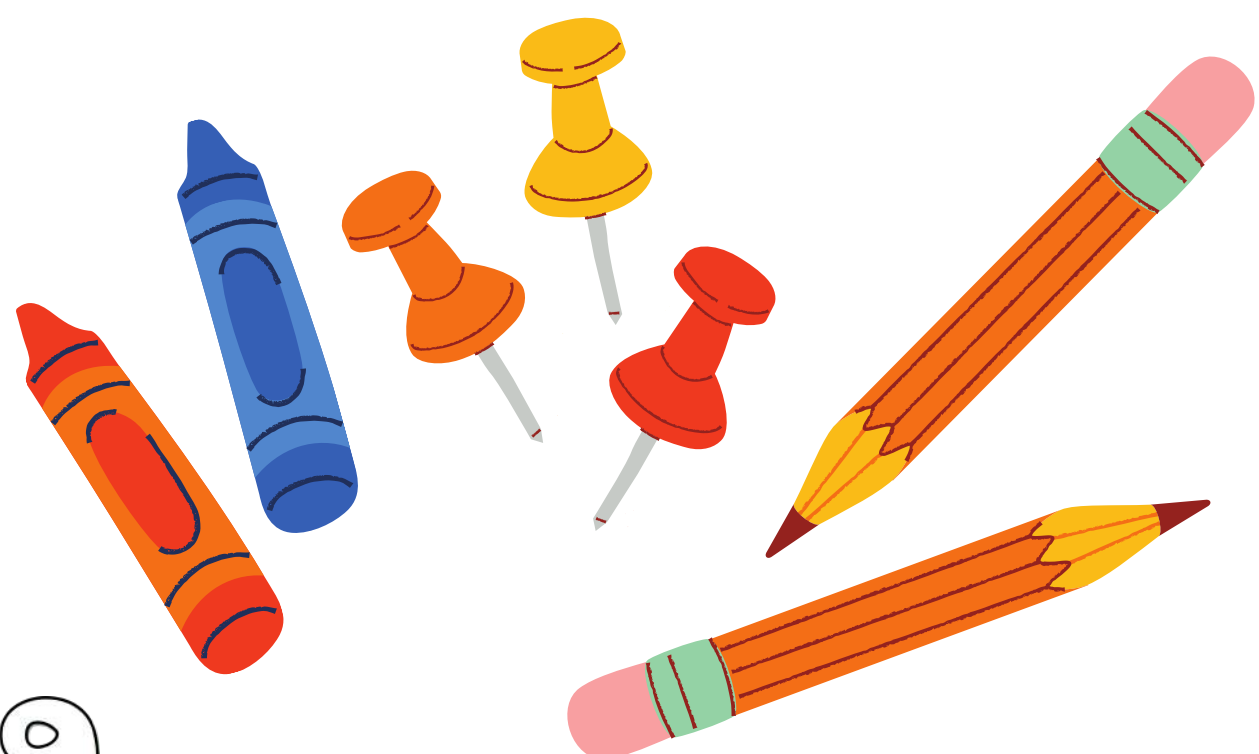
When Little Bunny's turn finally came, he felt a bit worried but once he started to speak his worries soon went away:

"When I grow up, I want to write and read stories like my Papa. I will write books about all of the adventures in our forest!"



In all their excitement, no one noticed how quickly the first day of school passed. When the final bell of the day rang, everyone rushed to the schoolyard but Little Bunny didn't want to leave yet!

He stayed in the classroom by himself, curiously looking at his ABC book, when he heard the voice of Miss Deer as she told him **"Come on now, the school day is over, you may go outside and play with your classmates. Don't worry, you will be back again tomorrow for more laughter and learning!"**

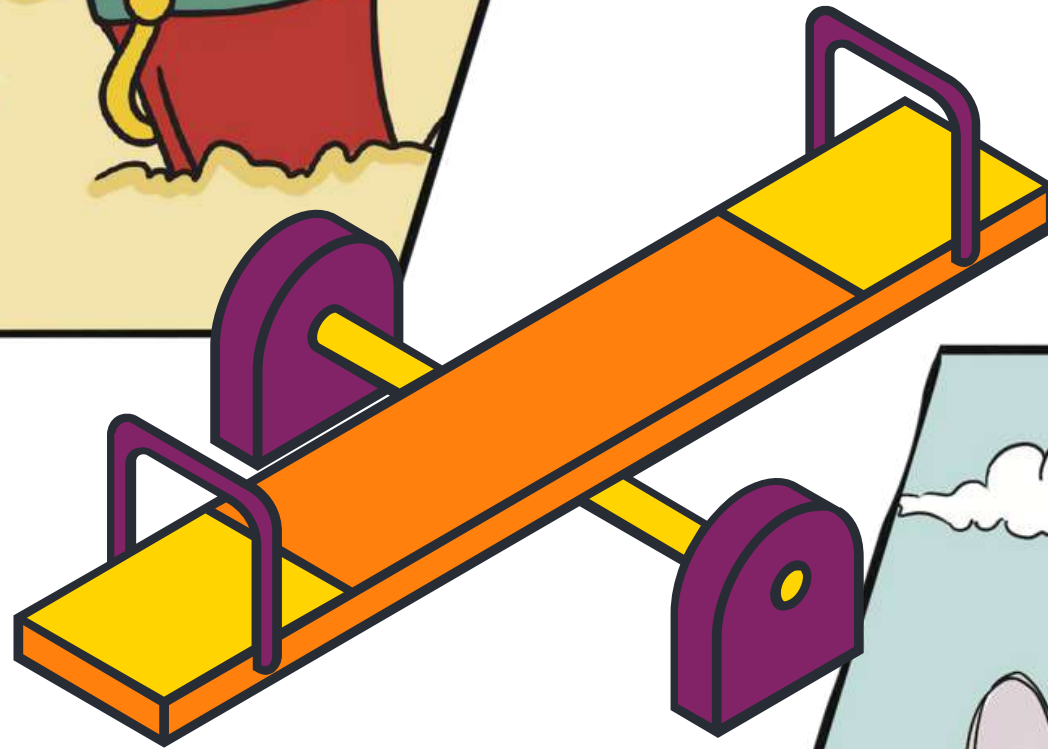
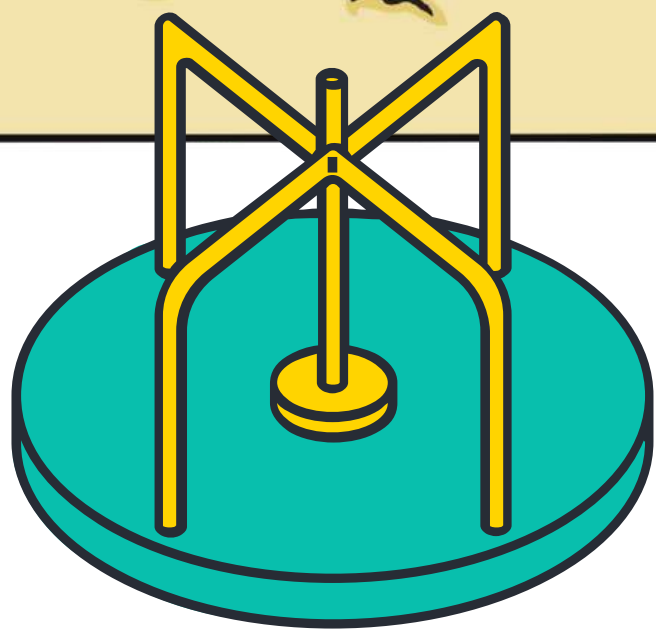
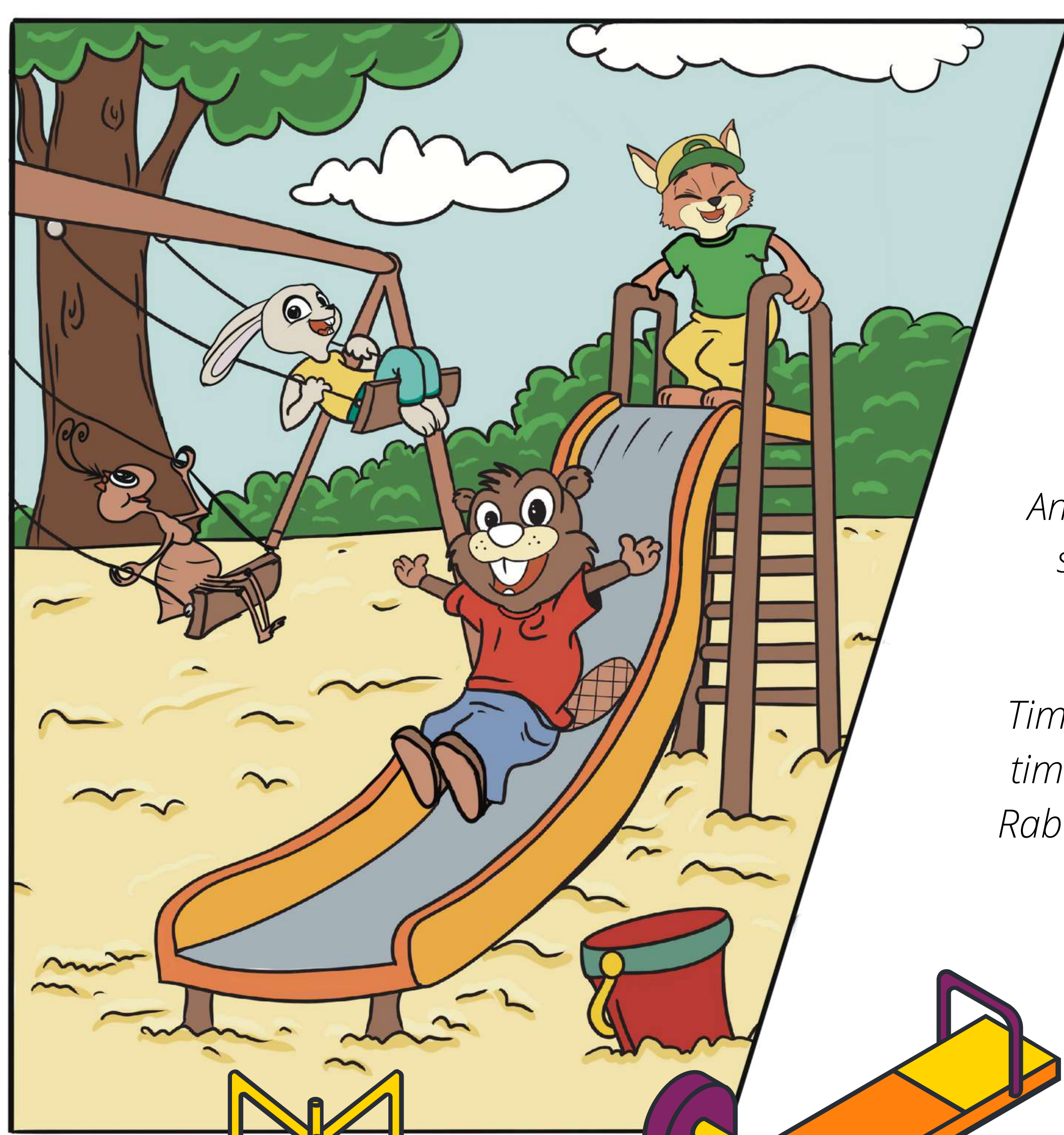




ABC

And so, Little Bunny went to the school yard to find everybody playing hide and seek.

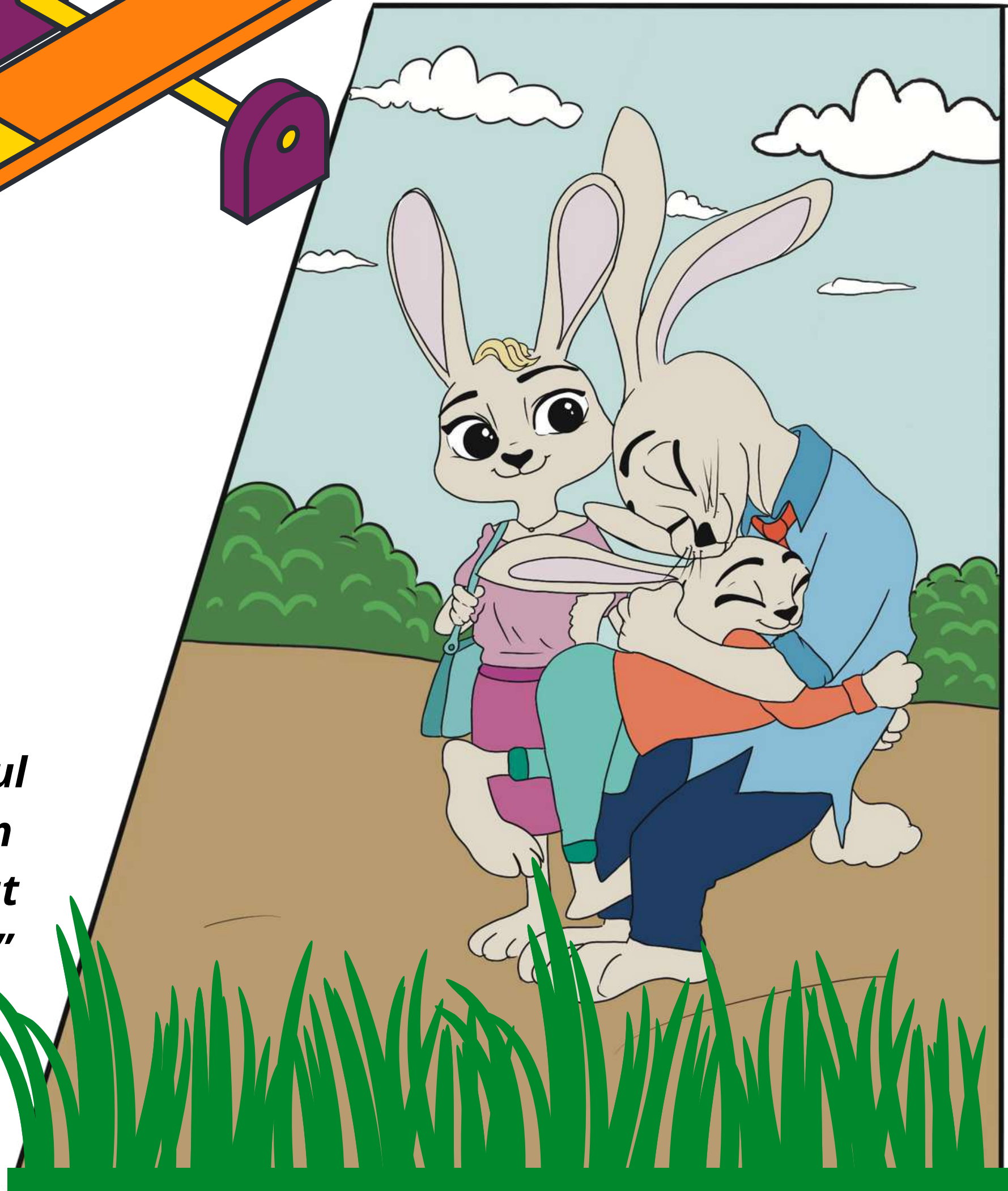
Time quickly went by, and in no time at all, Bunny saw Momma Rabbit and Papa Rabbit waiting for him at the school gates.



He rushed towards them and before they even had a chance to ask him anything he exclaimed:

"That was such an amazing adventure! School is so much fun, I have learned so much and already have so many new friends!

I'm going to write the most wonderful story in the world so that all children get excited for a fantastic first day at school, just like the one I had today!"



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Transitions for all into school

2019-1-UK01-KA201-062038

Intellectual Output 3
Parents' Guide on Transition



<https://eutrainsproject.eu/>

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