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**Incoming Kindergarten “New School Year” Book List**

Though many children eagerly look forward to beginning school, others find it more worrisome. Here are a few books that may offer reassurance and often, a good laugh, too:

**The Night Before Kindergarten** by Natasha Wing (Reading Railroad Books, 2001, paperback, ages 4-8). It’s the first day of school. Join the kids as they prepare for kindergarten, packing school supplies, posing for pictures, and the hardest part of all―saying goodbye to Mom and Dad. But maybe it won’t be so hard once they discover just how much fun kindergarten really is!

**It’s Time for School With Tallulah** by Nancy Wolff (Holt, 2007, ages 4‑6). Tallulah the cat works to make her new student, Nigel the penguin, feel comfortable and safe. Although supposedly Tallulah is playing school with her friends and her dog, children will get a good preview of how a day unfolds in kindergarten. This is a lighthearted look at beginning school for children.

**Off to Kindergarten** by Tony Johnston (Cartwheel/Scholastic, 2007, ages 4‑6). In this rhyming text, a little boy describes all the things he plans to bring to school, from a sandbox to a chair for his stuffed bear. Children will be reassured by his happy acceptance of his mother’s word that the teacher will have everything he needs. Melissa Sweet’s bright, jaunty paintings keep the tone upbeat.

**My Kindergarten** by Rosemary Wells (Hyperion, 2004, paperback, ages 4‑6). Wells, who writes many books to help children work on the tasks they will need at school and help them feel comfortable with the classroom, takes one of her earlier characters, Emily, and shows her throughout the school year with her classmates. Month by month, tenderness, empathy, and the joys of learning are modeled on every page through words and Wells’ endearing animal characters.

**The Twelve Days of Kindergarten: A Counting Book** by Deborah Lee Rose (Harry N. Abrams Books, 2003, ages 3-6). “On the first day of kindergarten, my teacher gave to me the whole alphabet from A to Z.” Each day promises an adventure, as teachers give their students something new to do. Kids will love following along and joining in as the text accumulates, culminating on the twelfth day. Readers of all ages will want
to enroll!

**Timothy Goes to School** by Rosemary Wells (Puffin, 2000, ages 3-5 years). Timothy is very excited about starting school―until he meets Claude. Claude sits next to him, and he wears all the right clothes, says all the right things, and garners praise from his teacher and classmates. Timothy is feeling down, until he meets a girl who’s having the same problem with her seatmate.

**Welcome to Kindergarten** by Anne Rockwell (Walker Children’s, 2004, ages 3-6 years). Join Tim as he visits his future kindergarten classroom and learns what he will be doing during his first year of school. Explore the reading, math, and art centers. Sit at the desk where he will practice writing, counting, and telling time. The classroom may look a little too big at first, but after finding out about all the fun ahead, it doesn’t seem too big at all. In fact, it’s just the right size.

**If You Take a Mouse to School** by Laura Numeroff (Harper Collins, 2002, ages 4-8 years). This adorable, well-known rodent returns! This time he accompanies his human friend to school, and his enthusiasm for learning fascinates the class. Mouse joyfully discovers new activities, which include performing a science experiment, building a “mouse house” with blocks, writing a book, and more.

**Pete the Cat, Rocking in My School Shoes** by Eric Litwin (Harper Collins, 2011, ages 4-8 years). Pete the Cat is back—and this time he’s rocking in his school shoes. Pete discovers the library, the lunchroom, the playground, and lots of other cool places at school. And no matter where he goes, Pete never stops moving and grooving and singing his song . . . because it’s all good.

**Chicka Chicka Boom Boom** by Bill Martin, Jr. (Simon & Schuster, 1989, ages 3-6 years). The 26 characters in this rhythmic, rhyming baby book are a lowercase alphabet with attitude. “A told b, and b told c, ‘I’ll meet you at the top of the coconut tree’”―which probably seemed like a good idea until the other 23 members of the gang decided to follow suit. The luxuriant green palm tree is standing straight and tall on the first page, but it begins to groan and bend under its alphabetical burden. First the coconuts fall off, then (“Chicka chicka... BOOM! BOOM”) all the letters end up in a big heap underneath.

**Chrysanthemum** by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow Books, 1992, ages 4-8 years). With perfect trust in her doting parents, Chrysanthemum (a mouse) knows that her name is, as they tell her, “absolutely perfect”―until she goes to school and is teased about it by her classmates, especially the imperious Victoria. Doubt sets in, to be allayed each night by “hugs and kisses and Parcheesi,” but then reintroduced next day. Fortunately, a charismatic music teacher whose name happens to be Delphinium makes flower names a new fad.

**The Kissing Hand** by Audrey Penn (Tanglewood Press, 1993, ages 3-8 years). School is starting in the forest, but Chester Raccoon does not want to go. To help ease Chester’s fears, Mrs. Raccoon shares a family secret called the Kissing Hand to give him the reassurance of her love any time his world feels a little scary. Since its first publication in 1993, this heartwarming book has become a children’s classic that has touched the lives of millions of children and their parents, especially at times of separation, such as the start of school.

**Kindergarten Rocks** by Katie Davis (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2005, ages 4-6 years). Dexter Dugan is about to start kindergarten, and his stuffed dog, Rufus, “is an eensy teensy beensy bit scared” about it. Thankfully, Dex’s third-grader sister Jessie sees that her brother is really the scared one and sets about cheerfully reassuring her sibling: “Don’t worry, kindergarten rocks.” A succession of cartoon illustrations and speech bubbles follow the large-eyed child through his first day of school. A gentle, humorous read to calm the anxiety of younger students.

**Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come** by Nancy Carlson (Viking Juvenile, 1999, ages 2-6 years). It is Henry’s first day of kindergarten, the day he’s been waiting for all year, and he is so excited he almost forgets to get dressed, brush his teeth, and eat breakfast. All the way to school, he asks what it will be like, imagining all the fun he will have. But when he arrives, it is bigger than he pictured and a little overwhelming. He wants to go home. After getting a chance to acclimate and meet a new friend, he decides that kindergarten really will be fun.

**Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten** by Joseph Slate (Dutton Juvenile, 1996, ages 4 and up). As Miss Bindergarten, a black-and-white dog in teacher’s clothing, prepares herself and the classroom for her new students, the children are also preparing for their first day at school. In alphabetical order, each of the 26 kindergartners is introduced through cleverly rhymed text with intermittent scenes of the classroom being transformed by the creative instructor.