I hope I can alleviate some of your worries as I send a warm welcome to another fresh school year! I'm ready to grow my next round of 5th graders and I have a feeling that you've already noticed your child taking on a bit more responsibility at home.

Each new school year brings about a new round of expectations. You and your child may already be wondering about homework, lunchtime, recess, and friendships. How about I begin by sharing a few things you can expect from me?   First of all, I promise to do all I can to support, encourage, and care for your child while he/she's in my class.   My top priority is connecting with students. Part of our morning routine will include something I call an "opener." Students have the opportunity to share how they're feeling, what they're worried about, and what type of support they need to be most successful each day.   If a student is carrying concerns, grief, or even excitement, learning can be tricky at best. So, my plan is to make those authentic connections with students before we dig in to the academics.

Another priority is making sure that student tummies aren't growling.   My own son complains that he's starving before lunch, whether I feed him a hearty breakfast or not!   I know that when I'm hungry, I have trouble staying on task, so my goal is to have plenty of fruits available for students to snack on throughout our morning.   I have been amazed at how readily students eat bananas, cuties, oranges, and apples. I'll be sending home a snack sign-up after the first week of school.   In the past each parent has sent in a bag of fruit once a month. I also encourage students to keep a water bottle at their desks each day as hydration is crucial for brain function. We'll have recess at noon and lunch at 12:30 pm each day.

Let's see, I've addressed emotions, hunger, hydration, and recess. Next up is the friendship worry. We all want our children to have friends. Cultivating a strong classroom community is an important aspect of my role.   The questions on the opener I mentioned earlier is super for helping students make connections with each other and learn empathy.   I wish I could promise that your child won't experience any friendship bumps this year, though you know as well as I