

Dear Parents,

Don't you love the start of a new school year? New sneakers, fresh crayons, colorful backpacks, cool mornings at the bus stop.

There's also the flood of new worries. Will my child make friends? Will he be challenged? Will he get the support he needs in reading? What if his teacher is too strict?

Sending your kids back to school can be bittersweet. I know, I'm dealing with some of those emotions too!

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 that life is messy. The end goal should be fostering resiliency. I can promise that I'll do my part at school to imbed strategies for growing resilient kids.

Now that all the important stuff has been covered 🤔, it's time for the academic low-down. I do have high expectations for learning. I also have high expectations for myself in providing as many personalized learning opportunities as possible. I want your child to have the opportunity to learn every day- and those opportunities will look different from one student to the other. I tell lots of stories and I have a passion for engaging students in the learning process.

Homework will not feel like homework. Students are in school all day - I want them to go home and enjoy playing, sports, nature, pets, family, and hobbies. Each month students will have the opportunity to share about something they do outside of schools. I'll send home more details as to the specifics for those opportunities in a few weeks. No fretting about this! Remember my personalized learning goal? We all start from different places, so expectations for each student will look different.

Lastly, I value you - the most important people in your child's life. Please don't hesitate to email or call me with concerns, updates, or questions. We're in this together! Your child's success is just as important to me as it is to you.

There's one more thing I can promise - at some point, I'll mess up. I might misprint a date on a newsletter, not catch a spelling error on your child's essay, or even forget to respond to an email. Now, it's never my intention to make a mistake, though as human nature would have it, perfectionism won't even allow for a world without mistakes. And likewise, I can't expect you to be perfect either. I've been late to my own child's conference, forgotten to send in birthday treats, and sent my daughter to school with hives on picture day (I thought they were bug bites...)! How about we agree to offer each other some grace when it comes to these little blips? 😊

I can't wait to meet your little ray of sunshine! We're going to have a wonderful year together. Thank you for entrusting me with your child.

With appreciation,

Mrs. Molitor