



# My First Day at School



## Teachers' notes

Written by Meredith Costain  
Illustrated by Michelle Macintosh  
Published by Windy Hollow Books

My First day at school explores the range of emotions and experiences that children may have when starting school. The story is told from the perspective of four children as they each narrate different parts of the school day.

The book lends itself to use with children who have not yet started school, as a useful transition tool and also to children who have just begun school as a way of perhaps looking at some of their anxieties and how they might be resolved.

### From the author

I wanted to write a collection of poems for young readers that build up to tell a story, in the way that a verse novel does. Writing the poem in different 'voices' meant I was able to explore the topic from several points of view. Before I began writing I visited several prep classes on their first day of school, quietly observing the different personalities of the children – from shy to confident, awkward to graceful – as they experienced all the new and exciting things on offer: leaving Mum or Dad, finding their way around an unfamiliar place, coping with rules and restrictions, and making new friends. But above all – discovering that school can be fun!

Meredith Costain lives in inner-city Melbourne with a menagerie of pets who frequently wrangle their way into her stories. Her books range from picture books and poetry through to novels and non-fiction, and include *Bed Tails*, *No Noise at Our House*, *Disaster Chef* and CBCA Honour Book *Doodledum Dancing*. Find out more at [www.meredithcostain.com](http://www.meredithcostain.com)

### About the illustrator

Michelle Macintosh is a designer/illustrator. Her most recent books include *The Wish Giver* by Rosanne Hawke and *It's a Jungle in Here*, by Steve Wide.

### Preschoolers

Looking at the front cover, what do the children have that they may need for school?

Brainstorm a list of things you may need for school?

How does the classroom pictured on the first page differ from your kinder room?

What do you hope may be in your prep classroom?

What are some of the rules you think they may have at school?





What are some of the things that worry the children in the book? For example not having a partner, having to hold hands.

How are these situations resolved?

Think about how you may resolve these situations if they happen to you.

Come up with a list of things the children may be worried about and role-play some resolutions.

### Primary school children:

Do you remember what your classroom looked like on your first day? Can you draw a picture showing your classroom?

What things were you worried about before starting school? How did you stop worrying about them?

What is your favourite part of the school day?

If you were telling a friend who hasn't started school yet, what to expect, what would be some of the things you would tell them?

Throughout the story we get to know four characters. Can you write a story about one of the characters?

What about the other children at school? What would their stories be?

### For older children

Meredith has written this book in verse using different voices.

What effect does the use of verse have on the tone of the book?

What do we mean by voice?

How do the voices differ?

How do the different voices add to the feel of the book?

Try writing reflections on school life using verse. Experiment with different voices.

