FEDERATION OF

FOLLIFOOT & SPOFFORTH

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Love Learn Thrive

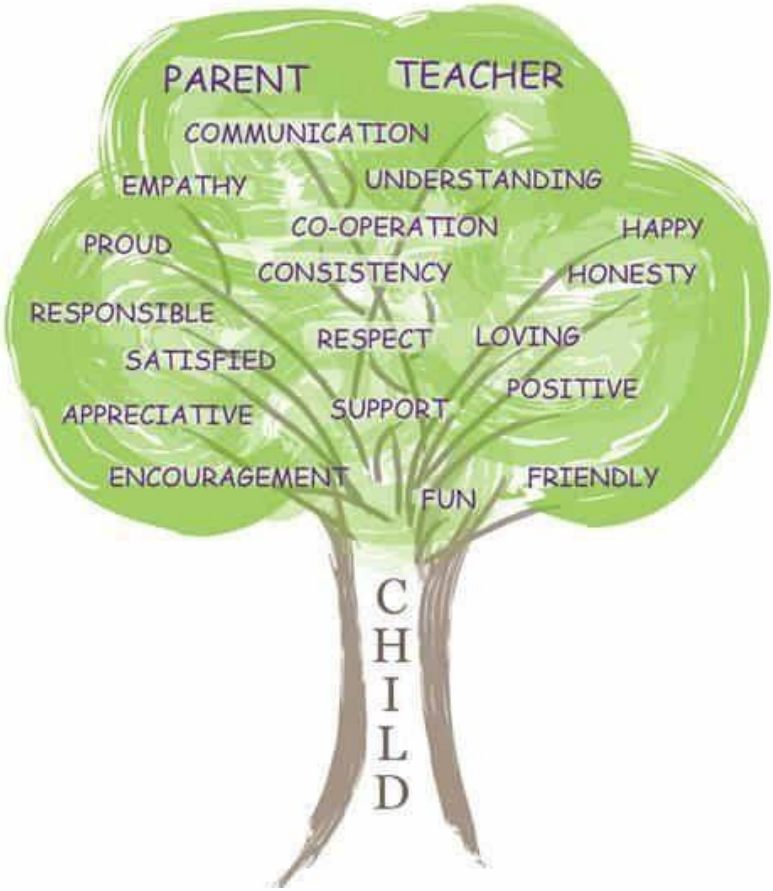
Federation of Follifoot & Spofforth CE Primary Schools

Transition Support

This information has been collated from a range of sources and resources to provide support, advice and strategies for children and families at Follifoot & Spofforth CE Primary Schools.

Why is my child worried about going back to school?

Anxious feelings are normal when experiencing a change or transition in life. This is especially true for all children and young people starting or going back to school. This might include 'first-timers' starting at Nursery or Reception, moving into a different school or year group or a change to their routine at home or school. This transition can impact on the entire family! It is important that parents always acknowledge their child's feelings and reassure them that it is normal to feel unsure / nervous about change. Looking for the positive aspects of change is very important so that your child doesn't focus on all of the negatives.



Your child may feel anxious and communicate this by becoming clinging, crying, having temper tantrums, complaining of headaches or stomach pains, becoming withdrawn, sullen or irritable or they may simply say that they want to stay at home.

Children may have lots of questions about school-related issues such as the structure of the school day. For our youngest pupils, the school building and environment itself can seem daunting and overstimulating with lots of 'unknown' people and unpredictable events and routines.

Our team aim to support the whole family in preparing our children for change and transitions, to make them as smooth as possible by building strong relationships with key adults in school, parents and children.

- We encourage visits to school for all our New Starters.
- Classrooms have a visual timetable so the children can see a clear structure of what will be happening each day.
- All staff welcome the children to school each morning and there is a transition activity for them to access when they come into class.
- Children who need extra support may access a morning nurture group where adults can 'check-in' with the children and give them time to settle and discuss their worries / concerns.

Children have told us that their worries and questions include…

Who will be my new teacher?

What classroom will I be in?

What if I forget what I have learnt?

Will my friends still be in my class?

What if my family need to tell me something when I am at school?

Who will I sit with at lunch, or play with at break time?

What if something happens to me while I am at school, how will my family members know?

What if I don't understand the work that I need to do?

Encourage your child to share their thoughts and worries

Ask your child what they are worried about. Explain to your child that it is normal to have concerns; by talking together you can share ideas on how these worries can be dealt with. Remind your child that you may be not be able to answer their worries straight away, but you can ask for help from other adult if needed, for example a class teacher.

Before and during the first few weeks of school, set up a regular time and place to talk. Some children feel most comfortable in a private space with your undivided attention.

Avoid giving reassurance, instead… problem solve and plan

Children often seek reassurance that bad things won't happen in order to reduce their worry. Do not assure them with "Don't worry!" or "Everything will be fine!" Instead, encourage your child to think of ways to solve his or her problem. For example, "If (the worst) happens, what could you do?" or "Let's think of some ways you could handle that situation." This gives you the opportunity to coach your child on how to cope with (and interpret) both real and imagined scary or unpredictable situations. You will also be giving your child the tools that he or she needs to cope with an unexpected situation that might arise.

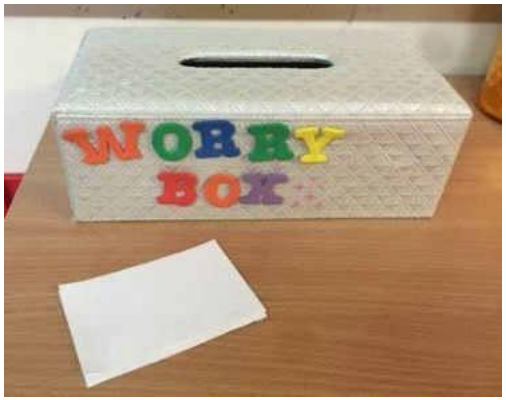
A child might find it difficult to communicate their worries….

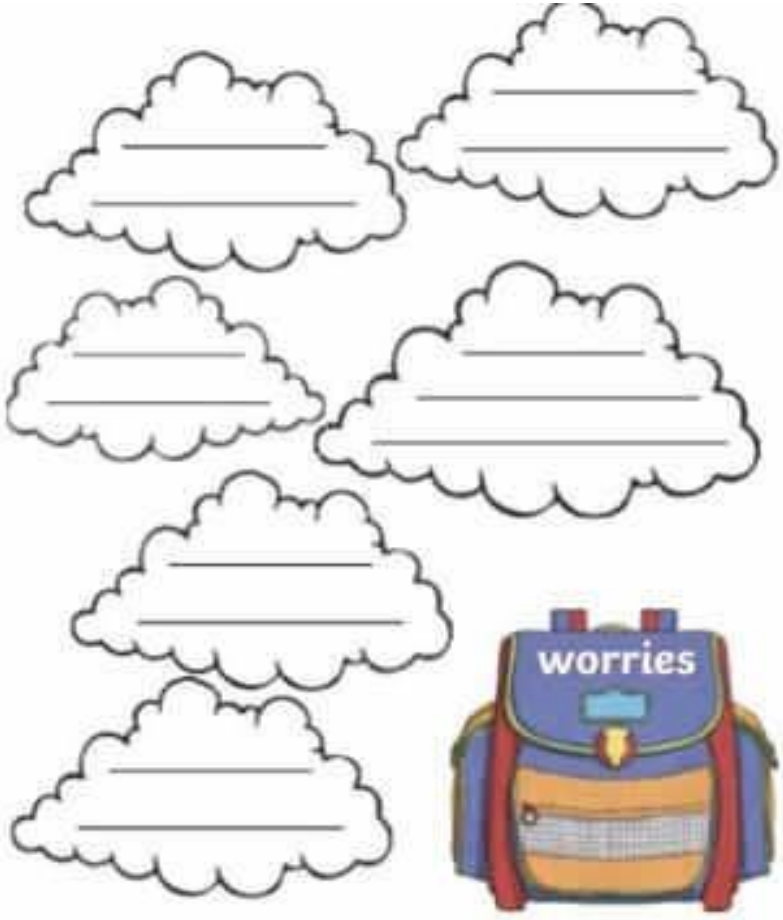
What am I worried about?

You could try using a worry monster so that they can write down their worries for you to read and feed it to the monster…

OR

A Worry box, which you could make together out of an old shoe box.





My Top Five Worries

Some further ideas to support you child with their anxieties

Role-play with your child. Sometimes role-playing a certain situation with your child can help him or her plan, and feel more confident that he or she will be able to handle the situation. For example, let your child play the part of the teacher or classmate during a negative situation. Then, model appropriate responses and coping techniques for your child, to help them calm down

Focus on the positive aspects! Encourage your child to re-direct attention away from the worries, and towards the positives.

Pay attention to your own behaviour. It can be anxiety-provoking for parents to hand over the care and responsibility of their child to teachers. Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and comfort you can model, the more your child will understand there is no reason to be afraid.

Timeline Leading Up to the First Day of School

At least one week before:	**A couple of days before school:**	**The first day**
-Start your child on a school-day routine – waking up, eating, and going to bed at regular times. For older children who having troubles getting up and out of bed, give them an alarm clock, and let them practice using it. -Ask your child to help plan school lunches for the first week. Alternatively, look at the menu together, so your child knows what is being served for lunch. -Create a list of school supplies together and plan a fun shopping trip for any items needed (PE kit etc).	-Familiarise yourself with the walk/drive to school several times . For young children draw the school, including yourself and your adults in the picture. -Ask your child to help get their school uniform ready for the first week of school. Together with your child, pack up the school bag the night before, including any treats for the end of day. -For younger children who are nervous about separating, suggest taking a special object to school that reminds him of home. A reassuring note in a child's lunch can also help ease separation anxiety	Have a good breakfast. Mark the occasion with a start of year photo. Encourage your child to be clear with your expectations. Meet up with someone to walk with. Plan something special for the evening.

Three Great Activities
To Help a Young Child with Anxiety

At some point in their lives, all children will feel anxious or fearful of something; it might be that they are overly shy, worried about starting a new school or new class, or just have a general feeling of anxiety with no specific trigger. Anxiety and fear can have a real impact on a child's ability to socialise and feel comfortable in school. It can also have a significant impact on their physical well-being and develop into physical illness. Here are three really good activities to support children who are feeling anxious:

Bubble Fun!

One of the physical side-effects of anxiety or fear is shallowness of breath. Deep breathing is a great way to manage anxiety; it activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which makes us feel calm.

Purchase a bubble kit from any toy shop or supermarket and ask the child to focus on blowing lots of small bubbles. Then, get them to try and blow one large bubble by breathing deeply and then slowly releasing it. You may need to show them what to do first! Keep trying until you have used all the bubble mix! Whilst you are doing so, ask the child to tell you about their breathing and how a deeper and slower breath makes them feel. Once they recognise how to do it, they will be able to start to do deep breathing without the bubbles!

Worry Tin

Older children often keep what's worrying them bottled up, so here is a fun way of getting them to try to tell you what they are worried or anxious about.

Find a box or a tin with a lid. Give the child some stationery and ask them to cover it and label it with something like 'Worry Tin'. Let them choose the name; it will help them clarify what the problem might be. Ask them to write, draw or take a photograph of what they'd like to put in the tin and then put this (or the object itself, if available) inside. Sometimes, it is enough for the child just to put what they are feeling away, but you can always get the worries out one at a time and discuss what the problem is.

Calm Me Down Box

As we get older, we learn ways to keeps calm and to manage stress. Children struggle with this, so we need to show them ways of managing their anxiety.

Get a large box and ask the child to decorate it. Explain that is their box and that they can use it any time. In the box, put different stress management tools, like: a stress ball, bubbles, a CD with soothing music, their favourite DVD, or anything that makes them feel good! Put the box where they can find it and encourage them to use it whenever they feel anxious.

My friends at school are...

My favourite subject at school is:

because...

A Note for My Teacher

What are you most looking forward to in year 3?
Is there anything you are feeling worried about?

My Superhero Identity

My superhero name is:

My self-portrait:

My secret superpowers are:

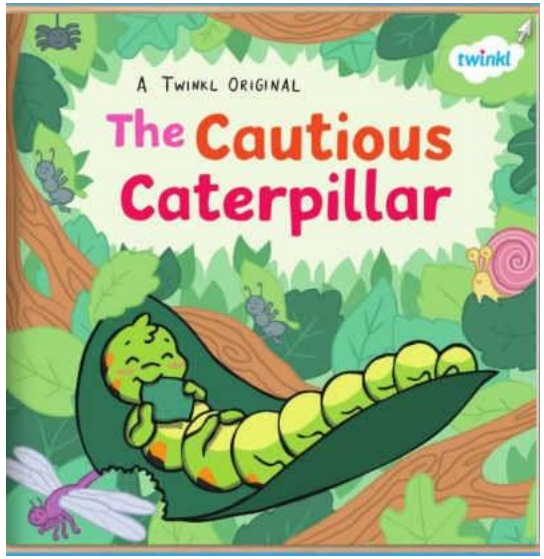
Why I chose my costume:

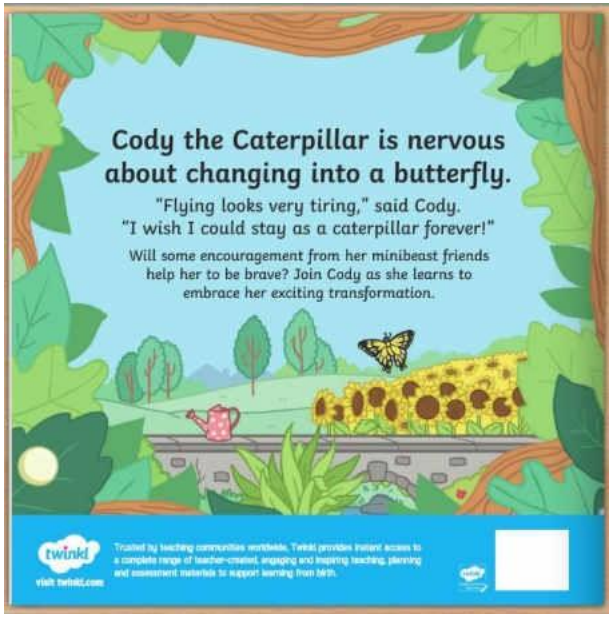
How I got my powers:

My top secret weakness is:

Mindfulness Colouring Activity

A story to share….

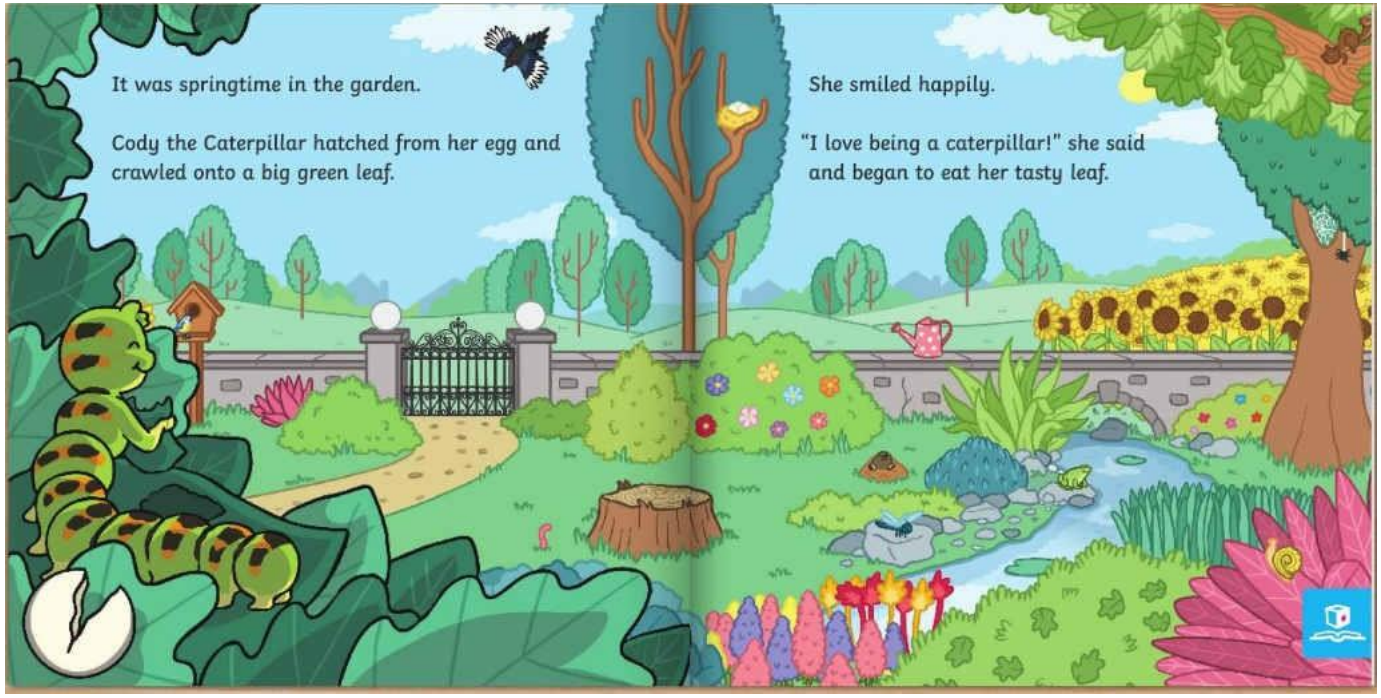




The Cautious Caterpillar

A positive story about the transition from a caterpillar into a butterfly….

A twinkl e-book….



Just then, a ladybird flew on over.

"You're very lucky!" said the ladybird. "When you become a butterfly, you will have wings, like me!"

"Flying looks very tiring," said Cody. "I wish I could stay as a caterpillar forever!"

"Don't worry," said the ladybird, "having wings is great. You can always stop for a rest!"

Cody smiled but didn't feel sure. "Maybe one day," she said.

She carried on eating and the ladybird flew away.

The next day, a bee buzzed on over.

"You're very lucky!" said the bee. "When you become a butterfly, you will sip nectar, like me!"

"I don't think I will like nectar," said Cody. "I wish I could stay as a caterpillar forever!"

"Don't worry," said the bee, "drinking nectar is great. It is ever so yummy!"

Cody smiled but didn't feel sure. "Maybe one day," she said.

She carried on eating and the bee buzzed away.

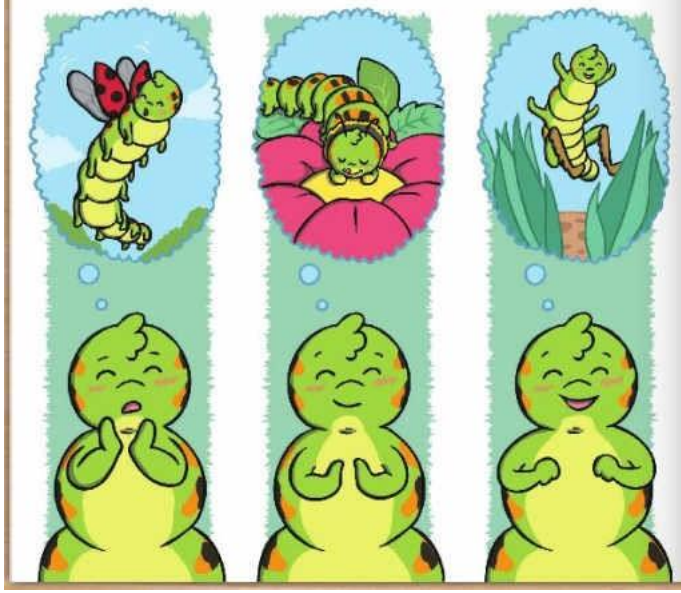
A few days later, a grasshopper jumped on over.
"You're very lucky!" said the grasshopper. "When you become a butterfly, you will have six legs, like me!"
"But I like having sixteen legs," said Cody. "I wish I could stay as a caterpillar forever!"

"Don't worry," said the grasshopper,
"having six legs is great. That's plenty
for landing on the ground!"

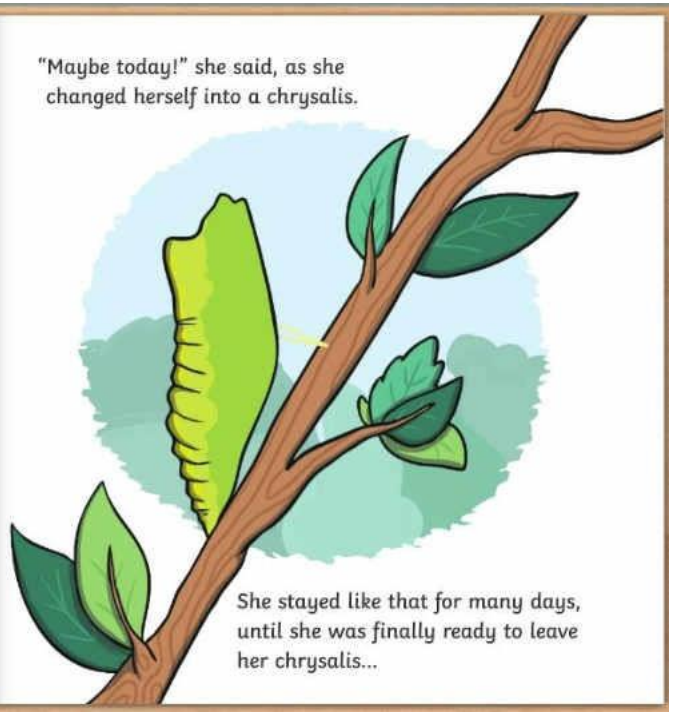
Cody smiled but didn't feel sure.
"Maybe one day," she said.

She carried on eating and the grasshopper jumped away.

The next day, Cody was full. She thought about everything her friends had told her and decided to be brave.



"Maybe today!" she said, as she changed herself into a chrysalis.



She stayed like that for many days, until she was finally ready to leave her chrysalis...

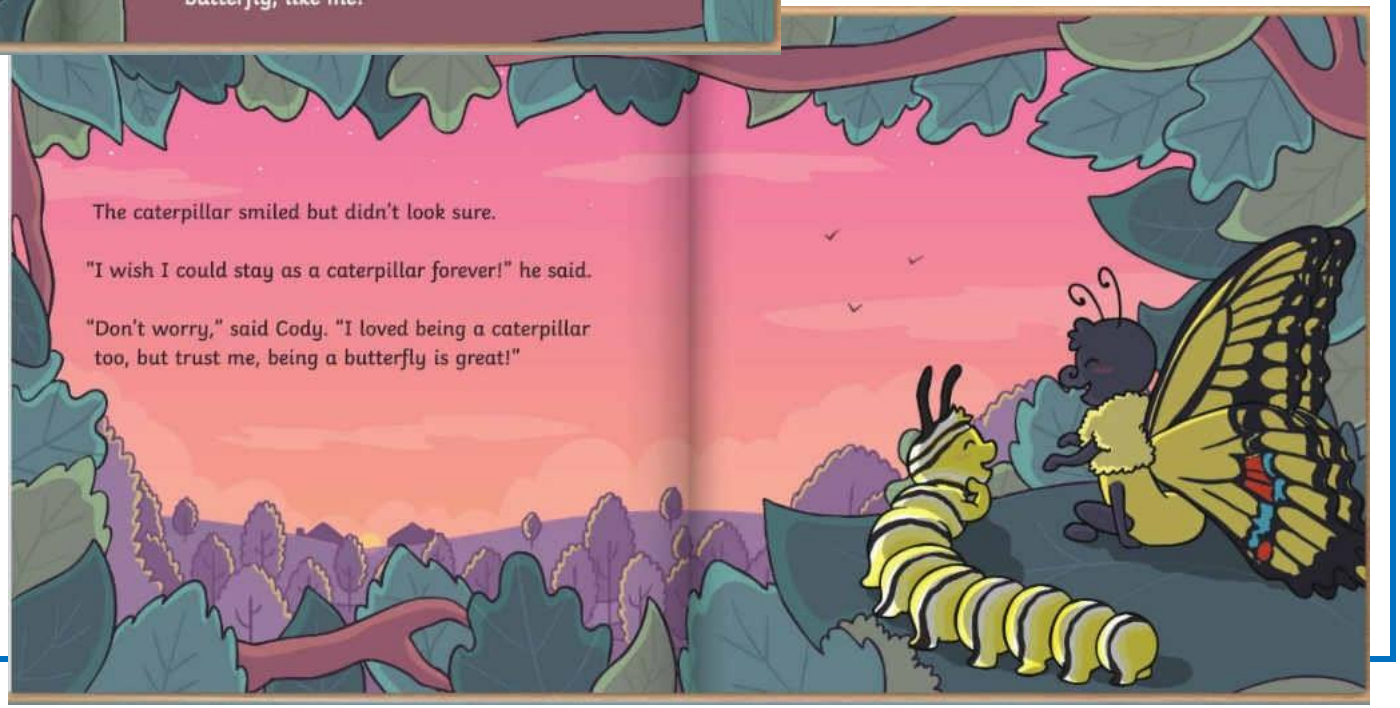
...and become a butterfly!

Cody explored the garden, feeling happy and proud of her new wings.

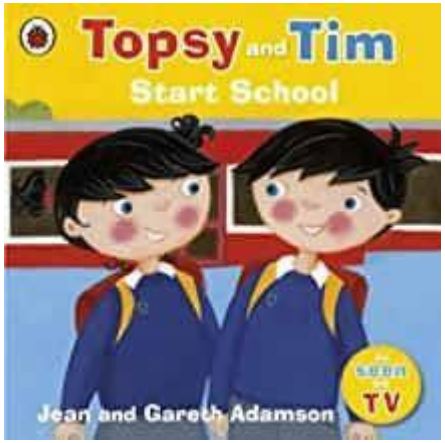
"Having wings **is** great!" she said, as she flew past the ladybird.

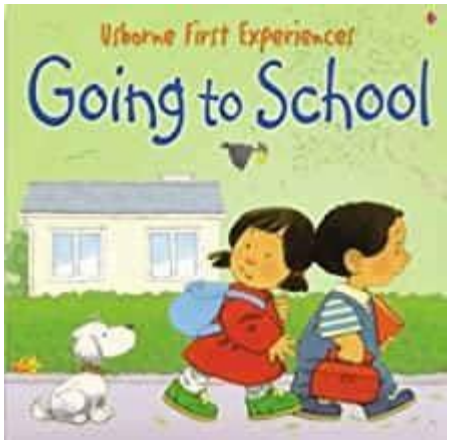
"This **is** yummy!" she said to the bee, as they sipped nectar together.
"Six legs **is** plenty!" said Cody, as she landed next to the grasshopper.

That evening, she came across a caterpillar eating a tasty green leaf.
"You're very lucky!" said Cody. "When you have finished eating, you will become a butterfly, like me!"

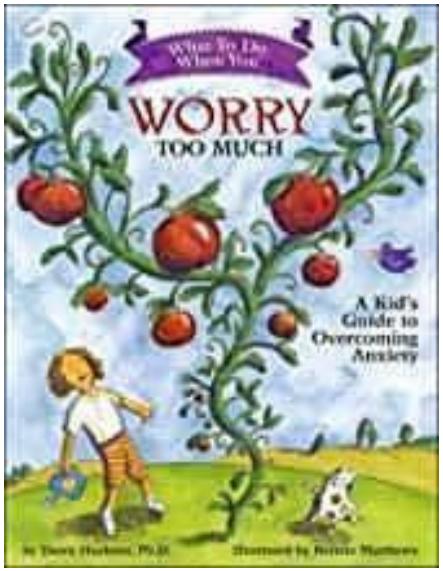

The caterpillar smiled but didn't look sure.
"I wish I could stay as a caterpillar forever!" he said.
"Don't worry," said Cody. "I loved being a caterpillar too, but trust me, being a butterfly is great!"

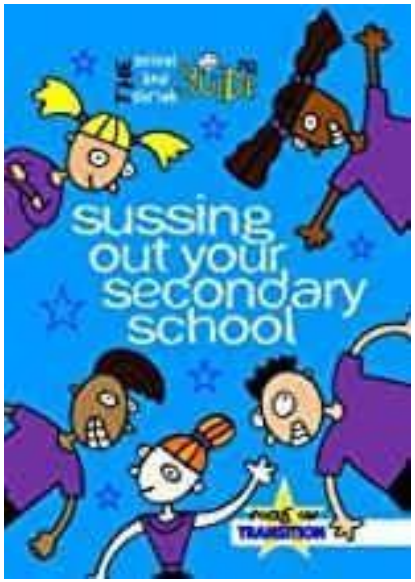
Starting school for the first time….





Anxiety about going to school….





Adults…..

Share any concerns with school at an early stage to seek clarity and reassurance

Be Consistent

Choose your words carefully, children will "hang on to what you say"

Try to find time for yourself so that you feel relaxed.

Model how you solve your own worries

Stay positive

Children….

Allow them time to talk and actively listen

Play games together

Spent time outside

Do things together

Have a routine

Talk about strategies

What can we do to support transition further in school:

Some of the strategies that we might suggest to use in school, to support whole classes or individual children throughout a time of change are:

- Provide booklets with photos and social stories, so that they can visualise spaces and environments.
- Ensure that children have spent time with the adults who will be working with them…this might include phone calls home too.
- Suggest that children could bring a transition object to school with them and offer a phone call home at a specific time of day.
- Have regular check-ins on entry/after break or lunch using emotion bears to help children to explain how they feel.
- Find a story that they like to read with a key member of staff to settle them into the day.
- Give an important role or responsibility to a child to carry out at transition times.
- Ensure that they have a buddy in school, who might enjoy a story with them in the morning or carry out a job together.
- Ensure that all information is shared between staff who have and will be working with a pupil, so that familiar routines and resources are used.
- Visual timetables in all classrooms, so that children know what will be happening throughout the day.
- Check-in at the end of the day to share a positive event that has happened during the day.
- Games and nurture activities which encourage speaking and listening to support communication.

Useful Contacts in North Yorkshire

Contact for Healthy Child Team: Tel 01609 798266

North Yorkshire School Admissions: Tel 016090533679