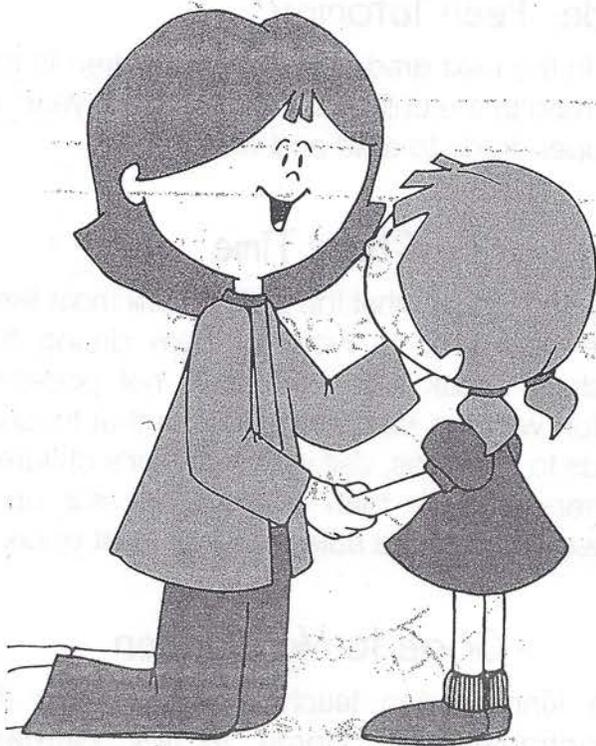


# Beginnings

Get children off to the right start with a smooth transition into the classroom.

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) suggests four strategies to teachers:



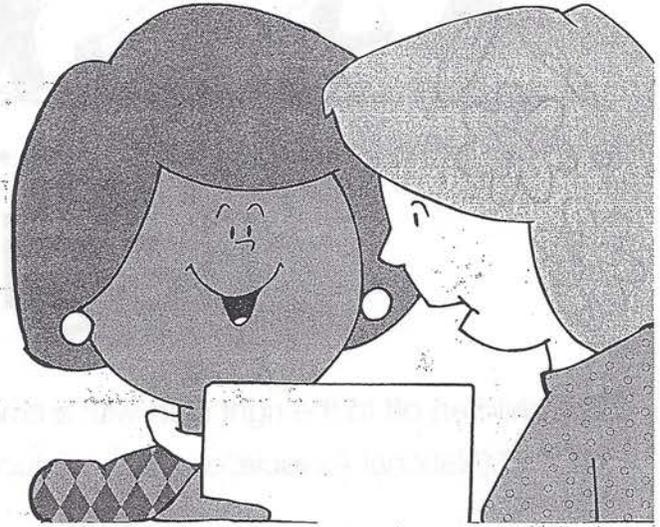
- Provide developmentally appropriate curriculum for all age levels in all educational settings.
- There should be ongoing communications and cooperation between staff in different programs. Teachers should visit schools that are sending students to them and should visit schools where they may be sending students.
- Parents should be involved in the transitions. Teachers need to inform parents of their expectations and should listen to parents' concern for their children (see Parent Information Activities).
- Prepare children for transition to the next level by allowing visits to the new classroom and by introducing them to the new teacher (see activities below). If all else fails, a letter or phone call is suggested (see Activities of Welcome).

These good beginnings can actually start with children visiting the classroom in the spring before they begin school. Follow the visits with letters of welcome in the summer. Home visits before school or during school allow the teacher and families to feel more comfortable with one another. Great first day and first week activities help children make the transition to school and to the classroom.

# Spring Visits

## One Class in Each Grade: Ready for the Next Year

If the class is in a building that has only one class for each grade, work closely with the teacher above or below the grade to make sure things go smoothly for the following year. A lower grade teacher should ask the upper grade teacher at the beginning of the year to save one or two of the worksheets or activities done during the first week. During the last weeks of the school year, introduce children to the type of work that the next year's teacher will be doing.

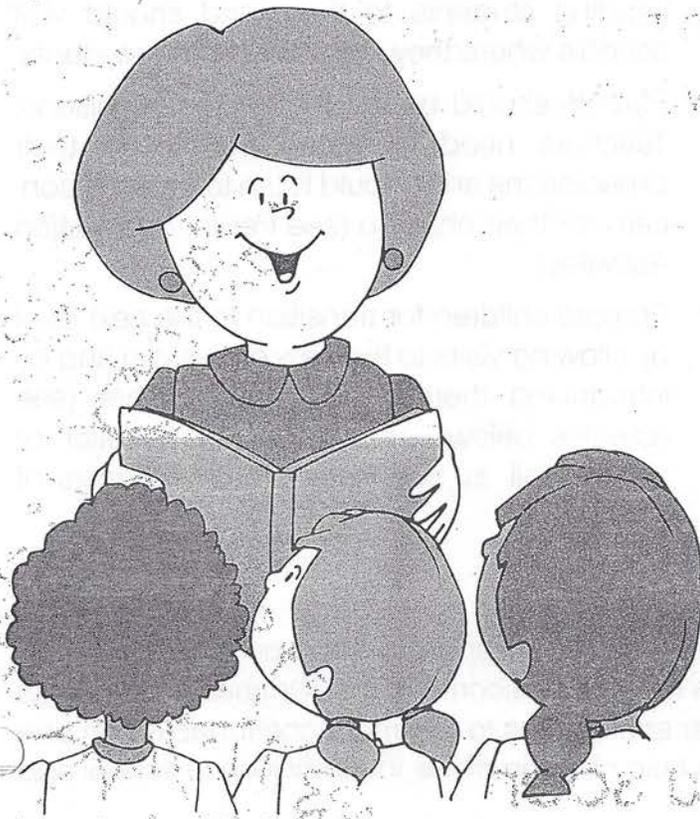


## One Class in Each Grade: Peer Tutoring

Pair up the children in one grade with the children in the next grade. Have the children in the upper grade come to lower grade to work with and read to the children throughout the year. In the spring, switch. Let the lower grade go to the upper grade to read and work.

## Story Time

Invite the teacher that the children will most likely have next year to read to them during the teacher's break time. If this is not possible, switch with the teacher and while that teacher reads to the class, visit with last year's children. If there is more than one teacher, set up a schedule so all are able to visit at least once.



## Come to My Garden

The kindergarten teacher should invite the preschoolers to "Come to My Garden." (Kindergarten actually means "garden of children.") Ask children in the school to identify potential kindergarten students. Send a note to these students. Also send letters or notes to nearby preschools.

(Note: This activity can easily be adapted to suit other grade levels.)

# Come to My Garden

The children of \_\_\_\_\_

teacher's name

class invite you to visit on

\_\_\_\_\_ day

\_\_\_\_\_ month

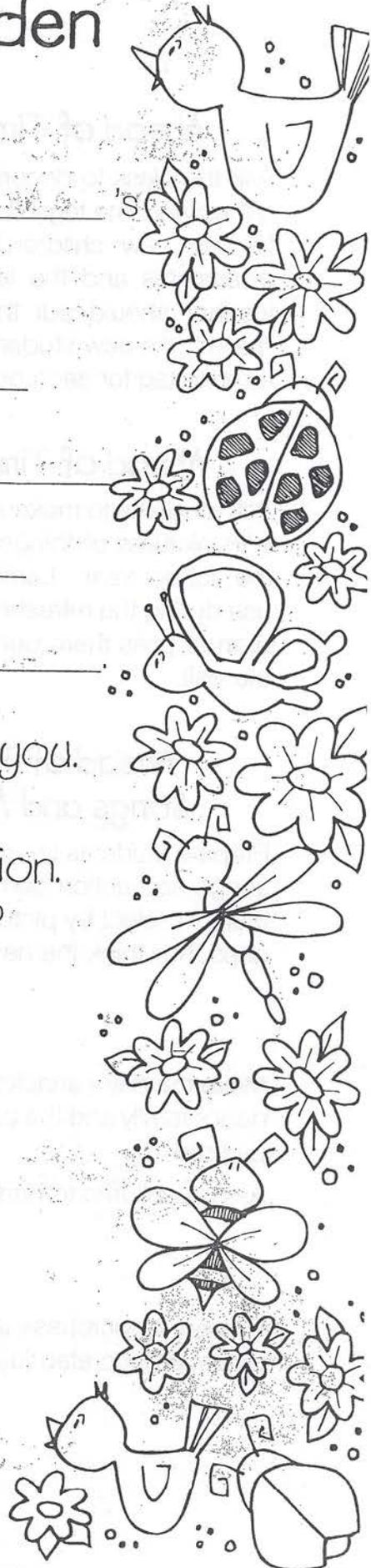
\_\_\_\_\_ year

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

We'll have a special gift for you.

We've all signed this invitation.  
Do you know any of us?

See you soon.



# Visit Day

## Ahead of Time: Name Tags

Ask the class to decorate borders around self-adhesive name tags. Have them make enough for the new children, accompanying adults, classmates and the teacher. The class and teacher should put their tags on before the "party." As new students enter the door, make a name tag for each one.



## Ahead of Time: Place Mats

Ask students to make and decorate place mats with pictures of things they have done during the school year. Laminate the place mats for use during the refreshment period. Assign children to pass them out to visitors on the day of the visit.



## Ahead of Time: Rhymes, Songs and Action Games

Prepare students by going through the rhymes, songs and action games that they know. Ask them to select by picture (see pages 74-94) the ones they think the new children will know.

## Ahead of Time: Snacks

Make the day's snacks with the class. Prepare enough for them, the new student, the new student's family and the teacher. Try recipes from favorite cookbooks or request contributions from parents.

Assign children to hand out snacks on the day of the visit and to set up a snack table.

## Ahead of Time: Gifts

Prepare or purchase a small gift for each child to take home. Try a flower, a craft stick picture frame, a decorated juice can as a crayon or pencil holder. Set up a gift table ahead of time.

## At the Door

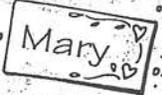
A current student's parent should greet visiting families and children at the door while the teacher is in the circle area. Provide each person with a name tag. Pair the new family and child with a student. If a student knows some of the new families and students, pair them with those people. The transition will be smoother for everyone. Children who are very shy should be paired first with a person from their class and then with an incoming pair. Or assign shy children special tasks such as handing out place mats, choosing songs, etc.

## Chairs and Forms for Families

Place chairs around the room at various spots for adults to sit in as they observe. If there are forms that they need to fill out, provide a packet and pencils at each chair so they may complete the information while they are there.

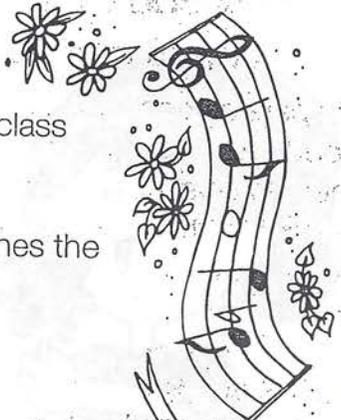
## Welcome Letter to Families

Provide a welcome letter to families as they come in. This letter will substitute for a personal introduction and greeting. The teacher is usually busy monitoring students and visiting children. Be personable in the letter and provide a schedule of the visit (see below).

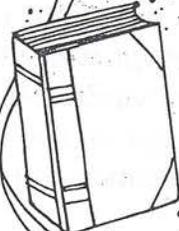


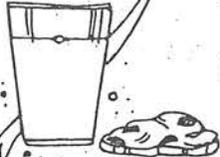
Mary

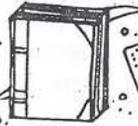
### Schedule



- Routine** (New children enter, are paired with the class and follow the regular entry routine.)
- Rhymes, Songs and Chants** (Sing familiar ones the new children might know.)
- Story** (A friendly back-to-school story)
- Centers** (Children work in pairs. Teacher monitors and visits with families.)
- Cleanup** (Everyone works together, teacher included.)
- Refreshments**
- Closing** (Newcomers receive a gift from the class.)





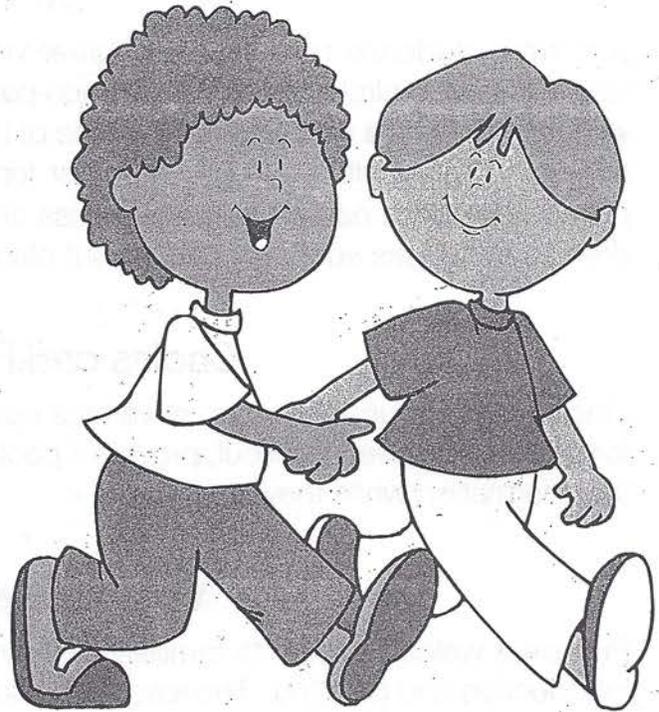


## Routine

As children are paired with newcomers, have them follow the same routine for entering the room as on a normal day. Have students tell the newcomers each of the things they do as they come in the room (hang up their coats, put their lunch boxes away, unpack their backpacks, etc.). They should end up sitting at the circle area with the teacher.

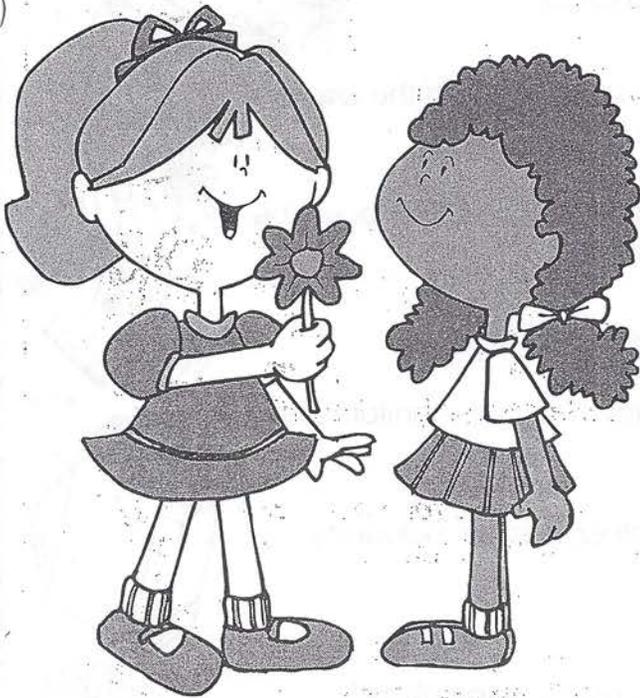
## Rhymes, Songs and Chants

As the children come to the circle area, begin with familiar rhymes, songs and action games that the class has selected ahead of time. If there are information sheets for the parents to fill out about their children, ask them which rhymes, songs and chants their children know.



## Back to School Story

Read a story about school to the children. Try *Will I Have a Friend?* or *Grover Goes to School*.



## Centers

Assign the children to centers to work much the same way as they would on a normal day. Students should take their partner with them and demonstrate how to do the various activities. At cleanup time, encourage all the children to work together so snacks can be served.

## Snacks

Students should serve the new children, with the place mat and snacks. Then students may return to the snack table and get snacks for the adult visitors. Finally, they serve themselves and return to sit and eat.

## Gifts

Have all children return to the circle. Thank them and their families for sharing the day with the class. Have students choose a gift from the gift table and give it to their new friend.

# Home Visits

Everyone is a bit anxious about doing things for the first time. Young children are no different. Help them look forward to entering the classroom for the first time by making it familiar ahead of time. Home visits are an excellent way to meet children and families. However, if home visits are not possible, be sure to send a letter of welcome and an invitation to the classroom.

## Letters of Introduction and Welcome

### Letter to the Children

Teachers should introduce themselves to prospective students through a personal letter. Include information about the teacher, the classroom and scheduled events for the first day and first week. Send something from the classroom for the new students to bring with them on the first day. (See suggestions below.)

Print the note to children. Copy enough for all the children in the class to have one. Make some extras for new children who might come in during the year. Print the name of each child on the letter of introduction.



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

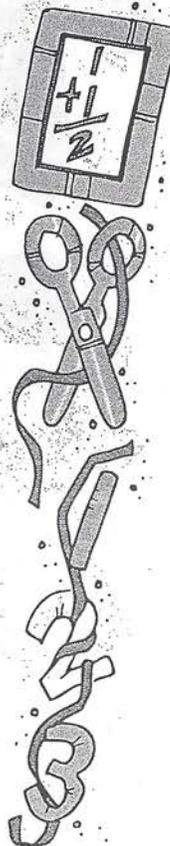
My name is Mrs. Carroll. I will be your teacher in *second grade* at Woodland School. We will be on the first floor in room 104.

I hope you have had a fun summer. I did. I went to the East Coast with my two girls, Callie and Molly, to visit their Aunt Jackie, Uncle Dan, Aunt Mary and Uncle Jack. We stayed in Washington, D.C., and Mt. Eagle, Pennsylvania. I have many of photographs to show you and stories to tell. What did you do this summer?

When you come to school, I want you to look for your new class pet. He's really excited to see you. We'll have to think of a good name for him. Guess what he is!

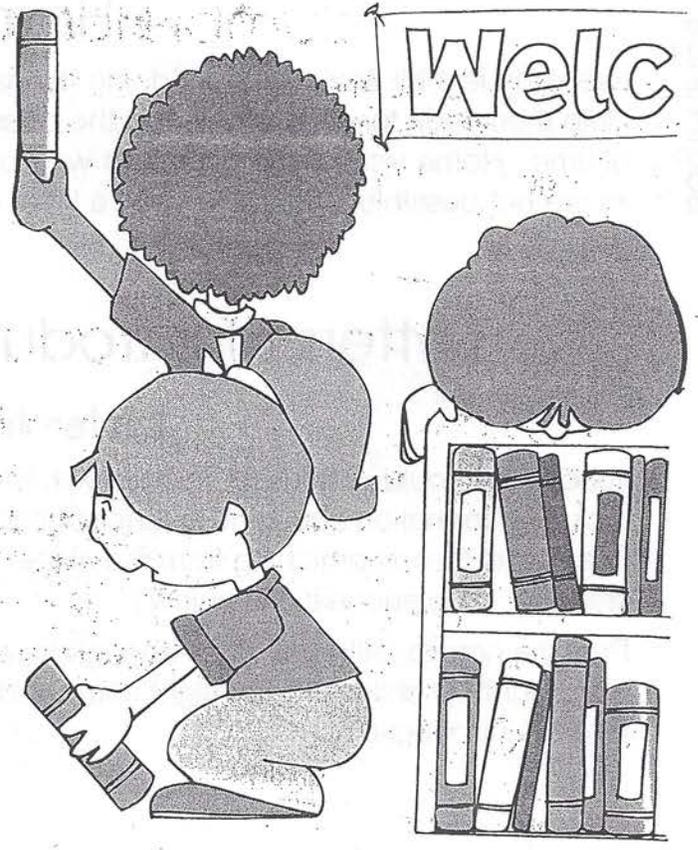
Please bring the enclosed puzzle piece with you on the first day and a picture of yourself, too. Don't forget your school supplies either.

See you soon!



### Hide and Seek

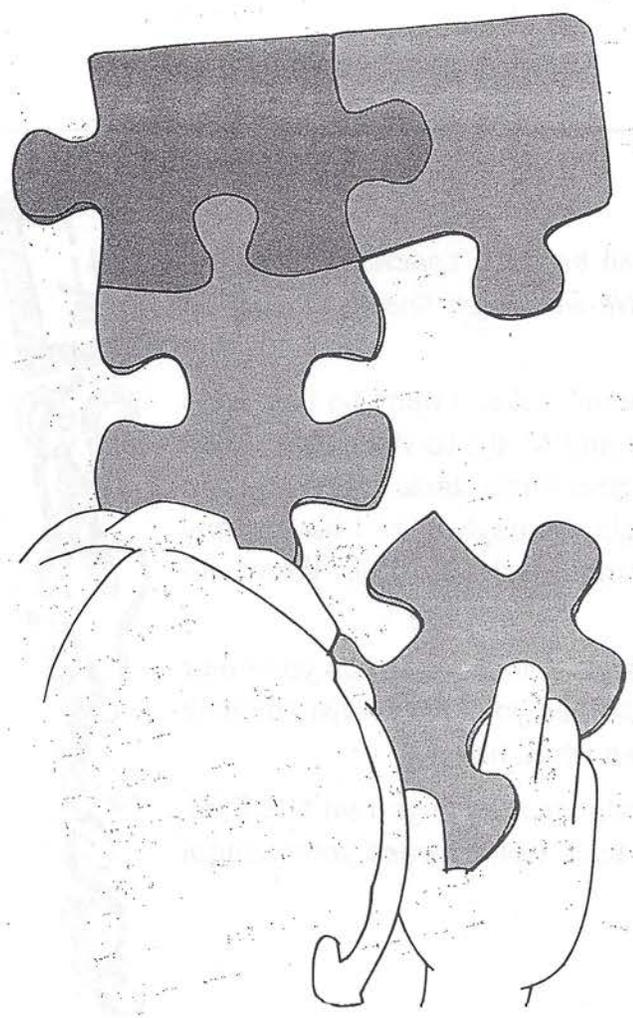
The welcome note should tell the children about something they are to look for when they get to the classroom. It might be a puzzle, computer, sand table, class pet, etc.



### A Piece of the Puzzle

Cover a small bulletin board with butcher paper. Cut the paper into enough puzzle shapes for each child to have one piece. Number the pieces on the back to show where they belong when the puzzle is put back together.

Also ask each child to bring a picture of himself. Rubber cement the picture to the butcher paper puzzle piece. Work with the children to put the puzzle together on the bulletin board.



### Everyone Is Needed

Purchase two puzzles with approximately the same number of pieces as children in the classroom. Send a piece of the puzzle in the welcome letter and ask children to bring it with them on the first day of school. Put the puzzle together to show that to make a good picture, everyone is needed.

Additional puzzle pieces may be given to the principal, director, teacher, janitor, secretary, social service worker, nurse, other teachers, etc. Ask these people to drop in throughout the day to help make the puzzle complete. This will help the children see that everyone else in the school is needed, too.

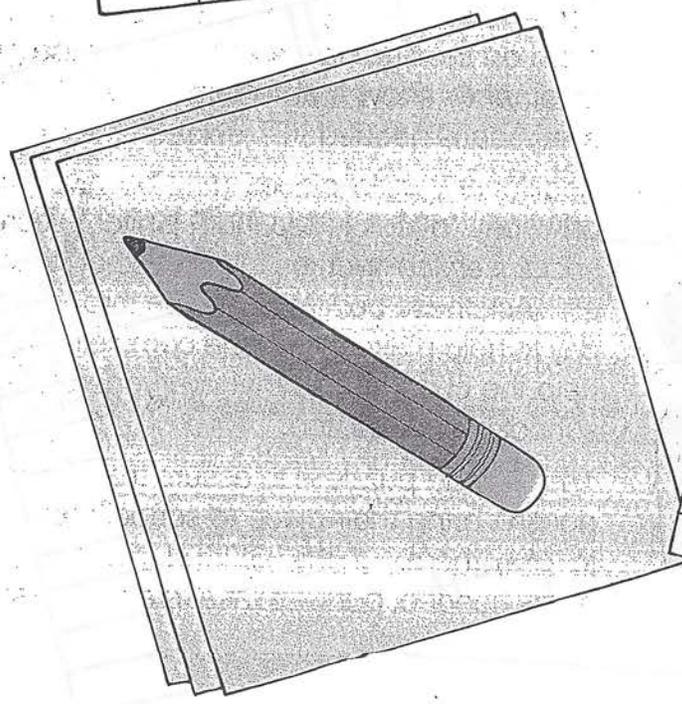
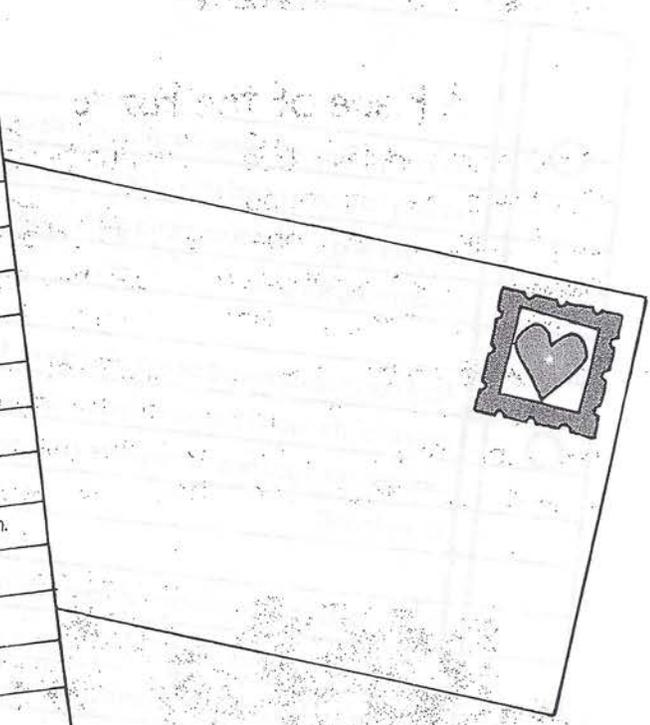
The second puzzle is to assure that if someone doesn't bring their piece to school there is one to give them. If the second puzzle's pieces aren't needed, put them at a free choice station.

# Sample Welcome Letters

These letters are not meant to be photocopied and mailed. Handwrite the letters on school letterhead or within some of the artistic borders that are provided in this book.

(See pages 130-139.)

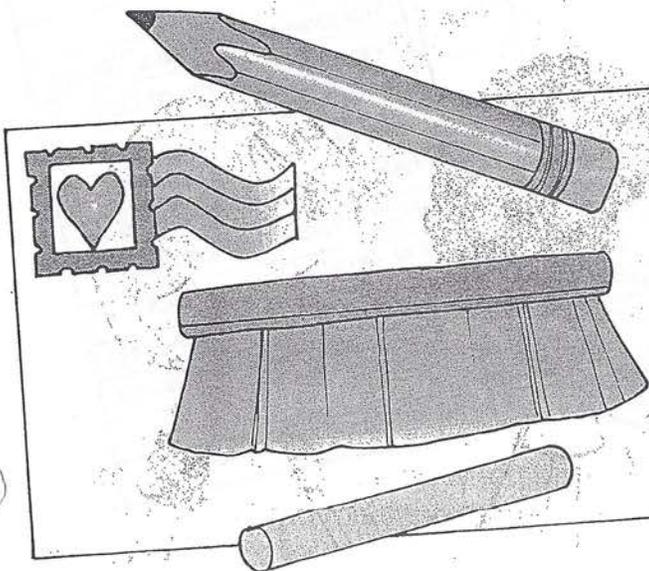
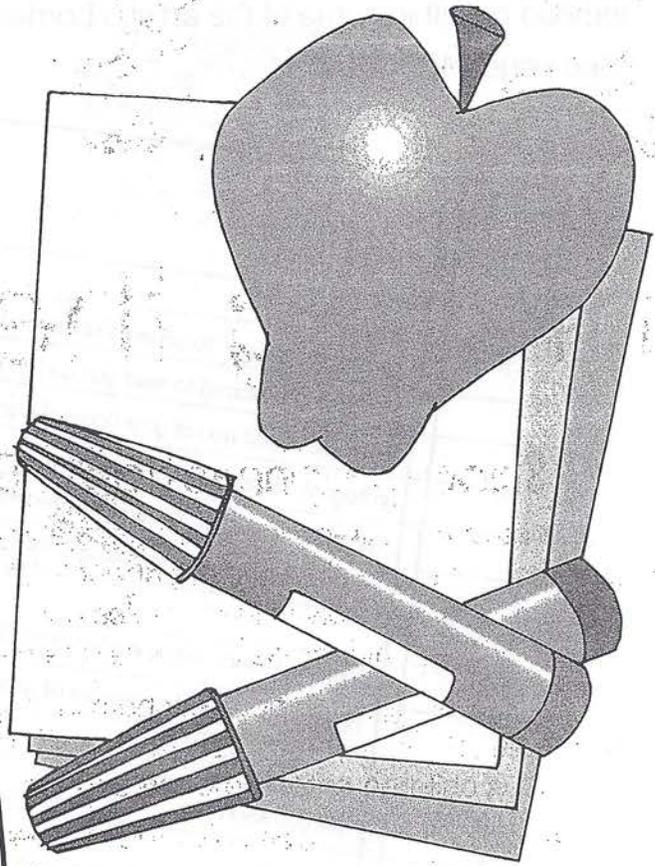
	Dear Dorothy,
	I'm so glad you get to come to Hobson's Preschool
	this year. I'm excited to meet you and your family. I'd
	like to come visit you at your house the second week
	in August. Please write and tell me when would be a
	good time to come. You can put the letter in the
	envelope I am sending to you, and mail it to me.
	Annie and Taylor will be in your class. You'll like them.
	Do you have something special at your house you
	would like to show me? I hope so.
	See you soon.
	Signature



	Dear Raul,
	Welcome to our class. We are
	happy to have you at Durham
	Preschool. Since you just
	moved to our area, we will
	help you get to know all of
	your classmates and show
	you around our school. If
	you or your parents have any
	questions, please let me know.
	Signature of Mr. Patrick

# Sample Welcome Letters

	Welcome to Riverside Elementary School. We are planning to have a great year. The teachers have been working in their classrooms getting special things ready for you.
	All of our classrooms will be studying about the people of the world this year through stories and pictures. Have you been somewhere and have a story to tell?
	Have you been somewhere and have a picture to share? School starts August 28 this year at 8:15 a.m. We'll see you then with stories to tell and pictures to share.
	Signature of Principal



	Welcome back to school, Sally. I'm Mrs. Glenn, your new teacher. I'm looking forward to meeting you.
	Could you and your family come to visit our school August 21 in the morning? You can see your new room and have a cookie or two.
	See you then.
	Signature of Mrs. Glenn