

An Ode to the Foot Draggers:

<u>Before School:</u>	<u>Transitioning into the school building:</u>	<u>After school:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrive early so that they can watch as the playground fills up with others. Being late an in a rush used to send us over the edge- the pressure to get in on time before the bell rang was HUGE - Grab 5 minutes to steady yourself every morning specifically with them in mind, so you have emotional capacity to absorb their overdrive without losing it. - Line up with them in the line- we went to the back so we could see what was happening. - Point out things that help them feel calm ‘ there’s your friend X, you had a great time with them playing XXX’ ‘There’s the teacher you like’ - Talk through transition points of the day so they can know and foresee what’s expected of them. ‘What’s the first thing you do today?’ ‘Have you got a plan for lunch?’ - Line up with them in the line- we went to the back so we could see what was happening - Allow them time to watch as everyone else goes in. - Have the same routine every morning. Predictability is your friend and theirs. - Ask the teacher call you if they don’t settle - Listen to your gut - I’ll say that again, listen to your gut and do what it’s telling you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak to their teacher and request for a member of staff to be watching for them on a morning and to be waiting for them at the door to help manage that transition smoothly. If they’re feeling edgy, walking into a bustling and noisy school building is a lot to ask. - Resist the urge to dash off to whatever you need to get to - have an agreed plan of what you will do when they’ve gone through the door and stick to that. - Fight their corner and request any of the following... early access to class, entering through a different less crowded and rowdy door, permission to go in with them, - Put notes in their lunch boxes- it doesn't have to be fancy, a post it note, a pen message on a banana or a napkin. It helps them to know you are thinking about them - A hanky, in their coat pocket with familiar scent on it (perfume, washing powder etc) that they can smell and feel comfort - A worry monster keyring or tag for their coat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steady yourself before pick up. Create some emotional margin for them. - Be on time for collecting them. - Have a snack, a toy or something special ready to give them which communicates I get you might have a lot of big feelings right now and I’ve been thinking of you today. - Allow them time to decompress on the way home. This can get ugly. - Allow them time to process their overwhelm, their emotions and their out of control feelings that they’ve had to keep in check all day - Work hard on securing a friendship for them that is safe, kind and reciprocal. - Ask for a lunchtime report from a staff member (without them being there) so you get an idea of what is going on not only how they are feeling. Sometimes their feelings don’t reflect what actually is happening and having a report can be helpful to give a more full colour picture. In this instance remember though that even if the fact and their feelings don’t match up - their personal truth is more powerful to them and important than the actual reality. The facts will just give you an idea of what is happening at the time for them to trigger those feelings. - Books from that help explain their big feelings to them. They’re are so many now. A quick google will give you a ton of great results. - Be the demanding, annoying parent, advocate for your child hard.

