

Shoot for the Stars with Librarian-recommended Books for School

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As I gazed into the night sky to see the Perseid meteor shower, it struck me how metaphoric of summer this annual night-time spectacle is. These shooting stars are long anticipated. The Perseid meteor shower occurs every summer as the Earth's orbit takes it through debris scattered by the tail of a comet. But, like summer's warm, sunny days, those starlit bursts of light appear suddenly, shoot vibrantly across the night sky, and disappear in the blink of an eye. All too soon the annual event is over and the media begins telling us that we should be turning our attention to the next event of cosmic proportions – back to school.

Store flyers are filled with items for back to school. But clothes and backpacks only go so far in helping children for whom school is a brand new experience. What could help? Something that is free. Kingston-Frontenac Public Libraries and Lennox & Addington Public Libraries have books that are great for helping children anticipate and talk about what to expect during those first few days of school.

Librarians from Frontenac and Lennox & Addington counties have book suggestions specific to a child's first day at school. 'The Twelve Days of Kindergarten' by Deborah Lee Rose, 'The Night Before Kindergarten' by Natasha Wing, 'Countdown to Kindergarten' by Alison McGhee and 'Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten' by Joseph Slate are popular titles that help children imagine what school will be like for them. 'The Kissing Hand' by Audrey Penn is a story about coping well with separation. It has become a classic for children and parents alike.

Librarians know that anxiety about the first days of school can be lessened through sharing books that have story characters children already know and love. Courage can be taken from familiar characters that are experiencing school for the first time in "Franklin Goes to School" by Paulette Bourgeois, "Spot Goes to School" by Eric Hill, and "Curious George Goes to School" by H.A. Rey.

In 'Emily's first 100 Days of School' by Rosemary Wells, Emily's new teacher tells the class that they will make a new number friend for the next 100 days. Anxiety about going to school turns into excitement about learning and discovery.

'I Am Absolutely Too Small for School' is the argument Lola makes in the book with this same title written by Lauren Child. Lola's logical explanations for why she shouldn't go to school fall short, however, when her brother mentions that her imaginary friend will be attending school and will be lonely without Lola.

This is just a small sampling of the many fabulous children's books available at your local public library. Visit your local library. Quiz the librarian about her or his recommendations for great books for your child. If your child doesn't yet have a library card, this is a perfect time to get one. Books can help children with new experiences, and the love of reading can help your children soar like a shooting star into each new season of their lives.