

Back to School Blues

Pillar: Positive Social Environments

Division I

Grades: K-2

Core Curriculum Connections: Language Arts and Social Studies

I. Rationale:

The Berenstain Bears is an educational children’s program that promotes socio-emotional competence through helping children navigate the complex developmental issues of their personal and social lives. Each episode features at least one socio-emotional issue (such as peer pressure, diversity, fear, or friendship). Resolution of these conflicts provides clear payoffs for both the series characters—and viewers at home. Social and emotional competence go hand-in-hand for young children as they learn and grow from their expanding web of relationships and interactions. To support their socio-emotional development, kids need access to people and situations that model: effective behavior, healthy expression of emotions, and positive social interactions. To experience these concepts first-hand, children need scenarios in which they can think about and experiment with their own ways of dealing with everyday life challenges.

In the episode, "Go to School", students will explore new and challenging situations in a school setting. When Sister believes that the 3rd grade will be too hard, Mother and Brother Bear explain that while new experiences can be a bit scary—learning about them and calling on past memories can be comforting.

II. Activity Objectives:

The students will:

- view and discuss a school blues-related clip from *The Berenstain Bears* episode, “Go to School.”
- listen to a story involving back-to-school or first-day-of-school feelings—then compare the book problems, themes and outcomes with those within the video clip.
- discuss and list feelings and concerns about going into the next grade.
- visit a class in the next grade and pose questions about it.
- draw/paint something they’re now excited about doing in the next grade.

III. Lesson Overview:

Children will watch a clip from “Go to School” and assess the set-up of Sister remembering all the reasons she initially didn’t want to go to kindergarten. A story about back-to-school or first-day-of-school feelings/concerns will be read to them, and a comparison will be made between the book choices and outcomes – and those that could take place within the video. After a discussion about feelings and concerns about moving into the next grade, children will make a list of questions about that school level. Students will then get to actually visit a class/teacher in the next grade up, pose questions, and learn about some of the interesting subjects and activities they’ll get to do. Back in their own classroom, children will draw or paint something they’re now excited about doing in the next grade-level.

IV. Curriculum Outcomes:

Language Arts	Social Studies
1.2 Clarify and Extend - Consider others' ideas - Combine ideas - Extend understanding	K.2 I Belong K.2.1 value how personal stories express what it means to belong K.2.2 value and respect significant people in their lives K.2.5 examine ways in which people create a climate of cooperation by exploring and reflecting upon people together in groups
2.1 Use Strategies and Cues - Use prior knowledge - Use comprehension strategies	1.1 My World: Home, School, and Community
2.2 Respond to Texts - Experience various texts - Construct meaning from texts	1.1.1 -value self and others as unique individuals in relation to their world
2.3 Understand Forms, Elements and Techniques - Understand forms and genres - Understand techniques and elements	1.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building
2.4 Create Original Text - Generate ideas - Elaborate on the expression of ideas - Structure texts	1.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community
3.1 Plan and Focus - Focus attention	1.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy
3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate - Organize information	1.S.9 develop skills of media literacy
3.4 Share and Review - Share ideas and information	
4.1 Enhance and Improve - Expand knowledge of language - Enhance artistry	
4.3 Present and Share - Present information - Enhance presentation - Use effective oral and visual communication - Demonstrate attentive listening and Viewing	
5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community - Appreciate diversity - Celebrate accomplishments and events	

V. Materials and Preparation:

1. Prep time with a class/teacher in the next grade level, large sheet of chart paper, marker or chalk, chalkboard, Outreach Videotape, TV, VCR, paper, crayons or paint and brushes
2. Cue up The Berenstain Bears Outreach Videotape to Clip #8

3. Talk with the teacher of an upper grade at your school about an information exchange. Your students will come up with a list of questions to ask the teacher and class. Prior to the visit, the upper grade should discuss the questions interesting work and prepare answers – and also display /activities that children in the lower level can look forward to doing.
4. On chart paper or a blackboard write, “[next grade] Questions and Concerns.”
5. Note that students may need to be broken into two groups for the “next grade visit” if the class is too large for one visit.

VI. Procedure:

Part 1: Viewing

1. Tell the class that they are about to watch a Sister bear cub just before she starts kindergarten. Ask that as students watch, they think about what it was like their first day of school.
2. Show the 1:13 clip on Sister remembering when she was scared to go to kindergarten.
3. Explain the concepts of fear, scared, nervous and worry as needed—then discuss the clip in relation to these feelings, such as:
 - Why do you think Sister is worried about kindergarten?
 - What was your first day of school like? Were you nervous of any of the things that Sister is?
 - How/When did you feel better? Did you make new friends? What kind of activities did you like? How do you think Sister could feel better about going into kindergarten?
4. Explain that it’s natural to be feel scared or worried sometimes, especially when we’re about do something like go into a new school or grade. We should just figure out things we can do when start feeling that way.

Part 2: Reading Extension

- Read “Wemberly Worried,” “Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten” OR “Get Ready for Second Grade, Amber Brown” (or a similar-themed book about back-to-school or first-day-of-school apprehensions). Encourage students to compare the storylines of the book and video, such as:
 - What was [the book character(s)] scared/worried about? How did they show it?
 - How were [the book character(s)] worries the same as Sister’s? How were they different?
 - How did [the book character(s)] deal with being scared/worried about school? Could Sister do some of the same things?

Part 3– Visiting the Next Grade Up

1. Ask the class to discuss their own fears and worries about going into the next grade. Brainstorm different ways to feel better about them. What nice thoughts can they think? What can they say to themselves to feel good? Is there a special toy or object they can take that always makes them feel safe and calm? (See Facing Fears activity for different ways to deal with fears.)
2. If they could ask any questions of a teacher and students currently in that grade, what would they be? List answers on the blackboard or on chart paper.
3. Explain that students are actually going to get to visit a class and teacher in that grade, learn more about the activities they’re doing and ask questions!
4. On the upper-grade visit day, take the students’ list of questions (just in case they are too nervous to ask or don’t remember them). Encourage children to ask questions of the teacher and class. Encourage the

higher grade to show the class some of the fun, interesting things they're going to get to do. Ask the teacher to describe additional things they'll get to study, learn about, etc.

5. Back in the classroom, talk with students about the visit, what they learned and things they're now excited about.

6. Encourage children to draw and write (or dictate) one thing they're now excited about doing in the next grade.

VII. Extensions:

1. If a VCR is available, tape the full episode of "Go to School" (see How to Locate Episode). Ask children what they think happened after Sister was worried about going into kindergarten—then show the actual outcome.

2. Suggest books students might like to explore on this subject include:

- "Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten" by Joseph Slate,
- "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn,
- "Wemberly Worried" by Kevin Henkes,
- "When You Go to Kindergarten" by James Howe,
- "Timothy Goes to School" by Rosemary Wells
- "Starting School" by Janet and Allan Ahlberg,
- "If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand: Poems about School" by Kalli Dakos,
- "Get Ready for Second Grade, Amber Brown" by Paula Danziger,
- "I've Got the Back to School Blues" by Gail Herman

VIII. Source:

- lesson idea adapted from [PBS Teachers](#).