Dear Colleague: 

June, 1987

One of the most popular theme weeks Fred Rogers has ever created is "Going To School." When Mister Rogers rides a school bus and visits an elementary school classroom, starting to school seems much more manageable for children -- and their parents. The five programs -- #1461-#1465 -- will air Monday, August 10 through Friday, August 14.

In one side of this folder, we've enclosed:

* Press release on the programs;
* A sample copy of "When Your Child Goes To School" by Fred Rogers;
* A black and white photo -- color available on request;
* One title slide (PI's only);
* Spot Copy.

Your viewers can receive their own copy of "When Your Child Goes To School" by sending a self-addressed, stamped legal envelope to:

Family Communications, Inc.
School - PR
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Please let us know how we can help you.

Sincerely,

David Newell
Director
Public Relations
DNLBH/sn
Enclosures

Lisa Belcher Hamilton
Assistant Director
Public Relations
MISTER ROGERS GOES TO SCHOOL will air the week of August 10-14, 1987 (#1461-#1465) on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). (Editors: please verify in local schedule). FRED ROGERS says that children starting school for the first time need support and reassurance. These programs answer many of their questions and help smooth the transition from home to school.
When Your Child Goes To School

A MESSAGE FROM FRED ROGERS
(of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD)

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FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS, INC. produces audio, video and print materials designed to encourage communication between children and adults.

To Accompany This Booklet:
MISTER ROGERS TALKS WITH PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL
A one-hour video cassette program available in 3/4", Beta or VHS formats.

Additional video and print materials for children and adults are also available on:

- Hospitalization
- The Emergency Room
- Dentists
- Competition
- Creativity
- Day Care
- Death
- Discipline
- Divorce
- Friends Who Fight
- Handicaps
- Imaginary Friends
- Moving
- Pets

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Special thanks to Linden Elementary School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and to the Teacher’s Center, New Haven, Connecticut.

My very first school was a small-town school that had eight classrooms: one for each grade. It was the same school my mother and dad had gone to. Those desks and chairs and blackboards would certainly seem old-fashioned now! I must have had a good time there, because I have pleasant memories about it. I know I liked my teachers—Mrs. Curto, Miss Albert, Mr. Gallagher. And I was excited about learning to read and write. I made good friends there, too, and some of them are my friends even now that I’m grown up. Of course there’s lots I can’t remember about that first school of mine but I feel sure that the good feelings I had about it really helped me want to go on learning.

Most children are naturally eager to learn and to join the world of the “bigger kids” who already go to school. But like other important times in our lives, beginning school can bring mixed feelings. Some young children may even imagine that being sent to school is a punishment. They may feel that somehow they are less important to the family because they’re away from home where all that’s fun is going on. They may feel quite jealous of their younger brothers or sisters who get to stay home with their parents. When children feel uncertain about a new experience they sometimes behave in the ways they did when they were younger. They may cling more closely to their parents. Some may suck their thumbs again. Others may forget their toilet training now and then. It’s not surprising for a child to ask for many kinds of extra attention or reassurance.

Encouraging children to talk about what they might be thinking is one of the best ways to help them prepare for their first
days at school. Telling them the truth about how you felt when you were their age can help them realize that they're not alone with their feelings.

Because beginning school can represent such a big change to a child, it can be helpful to keep other changes to a minimum. If you've been thinking about rearranging furniture or redecorating a room, you might wait until your child has settled into school before beginning those changes. Familiar routines at home can mean a lot to your child at this time. Knowing what to expect and when can make new experiences easier for all of us.

There are several ways parents have found to make the first days of school more comfortable for their children. For instance:

If your child already has friends in the neighborhood who will be going to the same school, you might arrange with other parents for the children to get together and play. You could even encourage them to play about what they think school will be like.

Some parents call the school to see if they can arrange for their child (together with a few other friends) to tour the school building and meet the new teacher.

Children need to know their address and family's phone number. It's reassuring to hear that this information could help them get home if they ever got lost.

You could walk or ride with your child to the school and back just to show the route he or she will take.

Your child might like to meet the school crossing guard. The guard can become an important new friend.

An unhurried morning routine at home can help your child to get ready for school without haste or anxiety. And sending him or her off with a cheerful "Have a good day at school" is much more encouraging than a warning such as "Be good."

Some children like to take a special container for their pencils and erasers with them to school. It might be one you and your child have made together. If that's not practical, some other personal belonging can be a comfort when your child feels homesick.

One mother I know put a photograph of the whole family in her son's lunchbox. (You could put one in a notebook or jacket pocket.) This was a reminder that they would all be together again at the end of the day—that home would be there when it's needed.

Many children look forward to little projects or activities planned for after school. Here are some suggestions:

- a special dinner or dessert that your child can help to prepare;
- cards or decorations you can make together for holidays or birthdays;
- playtimes with friends who now go to different schools;
When you were a baby, grown-ups had to do just about everything for you. They had to feed you and get you dressed and carry you around. But you've learned to do many things for yourself. Now you're old enough to learn to do even more things—like reading and working with numbers.

With encouragement, your child might want to talk about the day's school activities—what was fun, what was bad, what was easy, what was difficult, what the other children did, what the teacher said. Of course, children often love to exaggerate about how "bad" the other children were, or how "mean" the teacher was. And there are some experiences in school—and in life—that all children find hard to deal with. One example is children feeling embarrassed when a teacher scolds them in class. But as they try to do their best, children need to feel that you are "on their side" and that you are proud of the fact that they're trying.

We hope that these ideas will be useful. Some time when you are talking with your child about going to school, you might want to read the next few pages together. The words and pictures may answer some questions and make it easier to talk about other things.

Helping your child get ready for school might bring back many feelings you had when you yourself began. No matter what those feelings are, if you can accept them truthfully and share them with your child you'll be giving both of you another important chance to grow.

Your friend,
Fred Rogers
You don’t have to know your letters and numbers when you first go to school. School is a place where people learn about such things. Teachers are people who help you to learn. They understand what children need to know. They understand that drawing and playing and working with music help children learn.
Is your school near your house or is it far away? Some children ride to school in a car or a school bus. Other children walk to school. Often there are special grown-ups to help children cross streets safely on their way to school and on their way back home. How will you be going to school?
When you go to a new place, it takes some time to find out where things are... things like the bathroom or the place to hang up your coat. If you want to know about something in your school, you can always ask your teacher. Teachers help children in lots of different ways.

Some teachers are women and some are men. Some teachers are mothers or fathers and some are grandparents or uncles or aunts.

All teachers were once children like you.

Do you know the name of the person who will be your teacher?
Going to school often means learning new rules. Some rules help keep children safe. Other rules help make learning easier. One rule that many teachers make is that only one person may talk at a time. Your teacher may ask you to raise your hand so she will know you want to talk. That way she can try to be sure that everyone gets a turn.

When you come home from school, you might want to tell your family about the children you met or about what your teacher did and what you did. Coming home is another good part of going to school. You’ll have lots to tell, and there are lots of people who can be proud of the ways you are growing!
GENERIC SPOT COPY FOR MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD "SCHOOL" WEEK, AUGUST 10-14, 1987 (PROGRAM NUMBERS 1461-1465)

10 Seconds
MISTER ROGERS GOES TO SCHOOL -- A special week of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD programs for children starting school begins Monday, August 10 at_______ on______________.

20 Seconds
No matter what Lady Elaine says, Prince Tuesday, Anna Platypus and Daniel Tiger find out it's not how much you know -- it's how much you want to learn -- as they begin school in the Neighborhood of Make-Believe in MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD. Join Mister Rogers as he goes to school, August 10th through the 14th in a special week of programs. That's MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD, August 10th through the 14th at_______ on______________.

30 Seconds
Going to school can be exciting, but sometimes it's frightening too. In a special week of programs August 10th through the 14th, Mister Rogers goes to school and finds out the difference between kindergarten and first grade, classrooms, and school buses. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, Prince Tuesday, Anna Platypus and Daniel Tiger find out it's not how much you know, it's how much you want to learn (after some interesting "get ready" sessions with Lady Elaine). Watch MISTER ROGERS GOES TO SCHOOL on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD August 10th through the 14th at_______ on______________.

STAY TUNED
Next: Mister Rogers helps with starting school here on_______.
FRED ROGERS PRESENTS A WEEK OF MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD INTENDED FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE JUST STARTING SCHOOL

A week of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD programs, devoted to preparing young children for their first day of school, will be shown on August 10-14, 1987 on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

The five Monday-through-Friday MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD episodes are designed to help preschoolers with their first days of school -- an anxious, sometimes frightening experience for many children.

(Editors: Please check your local Public Television Station schedule for the correct broadcast dates and times in your viewing area).

The five MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD programs explore the concerns children have about school -- what their teacher and new classmates will be like, how much they will have to know before they get to school, and who will take care of them there.

During the week, Emmy Award-winning host-creator-producer Fred Rogers takes a ride on a school bus and visits a real school. Along with a kindergarten teacher and a first-grade teacher, he tours the school's classrooms, kitchen, and bathrooms. "Children need to see that many things in school are a lot like home," Rogers explains. He also talks about what might happen during a typical school day. Rogers emphasizes that "you don't have to know your letters and numbers when you first go to school. School is a place where children learn about such things."
Rogers reminisces about his own first school days and reassures children that "starting school is an important part of growing -- and can be a fun part of growing, too."

A free copy of "When Your Child Goes To School" by Fred Rogers is available by sending a self-addressed, stamped legal envelope to:

Family Communications, Inc.
School - PR
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Funding for MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD is provided by Public Television Stations and by The Sears-Roebuck Foundation. MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD is produced by Family Communications, Inc., the Pittsburgh-based, nonprofit company founded and headed by Fred Rogers.

WEEK-LONG THEME: "SCHOOL"
DATE: AUGUST 10-14, 1987
EPISODES: #1461-#1465