



Part 1 in a 6-part school social story series

Mamadou Starts a New School

A social story about new places, big feelings and brave steps.

Written and illustrated by Nzi Ahouzan (Social Care Specialist)

What happens

New can feel very big.

Mamadou is starting a new school.

Some things will be new.

New can feel very big.



What I might feel

All feelings are okay.



Mamadou's tummy feels fluttery.
He might feel shy, or worried, or
wobbly.

All feelings are okay.

A grown-up can pause here and say: "Which Mamadou feels most like you today?"

What to expect

There will be new things to find.



A peg for his coat.

A new classroom.

A teacher who says hello.

New children

Anya waves at Mamadou.



He can wave back, or just smile.

Both are okay.

Someone who understands

Ben was new once, too.



Ben felt wobbly on his first day.

Now school feels like his place.

The plan

Mamadou has a plan.



1

Three slow breaths.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

2

Squeeze and release.

Hands tight, then hands soft.

3

Draw quietly.

His sketchbook can help.

Who can help

Grown-ups at school are there to help.



Mamadou can say, "I need help, please."

Or he can point to how he feels.



What happens next

Little by little, new becomes known.



The new school becomes Mamadou's school.

New faces become friendly faces.

One day at a time.

Ending

Mamadou did something big and brave.



Hooray for Mamadou!

New things can become known things.

And Mamadou can do big things.

Notes for the grown-up reading it

Start early

Read it daily for one to two weeks before the first day, at a calm time. Avoid leaving it until bedtime the night before.

Read slowly and pause

Let the child point, comment, ask, or simply look. Page 7 doubles as a feelings check-in: "Which Mamadou are you today?"

Practise page 6 together

Try the breathing and hand-squeezing when the child is already calm, so the plan feels familiar before it is needed.

Personalise out loud

Swap in the real teacher's name and real classroom details as you learn them.

Keep reading after school starts

It becomes a "look how far you have come" story.

Adapting across ages 5-11

For younger children, let the pictures lead and shorten each page to the heading line. For ages 9-11, the child may prefer to read independently or use a first-person version.

Free reference support for parents

SEND Parents Haven offers a free, private tool for families navigating the SEND system in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. No accounts.

<https://www.sendparentshaven.org/free-resources.html>

Accessibility

This PDF is tagged for screen readers, keeps the story text selectable, and includes image descriptions in the source layout. If your child uses symbol support, larger print, or a dyslexia-friendly font, this story can be adapted into that format.

Gentle reminder

Please have a parent, carer, teacher or SENCO who knows the child read it through before use, especially around EHCP transition details. Every child's placement looks a little different, and the story should match their real routine.

About Nzi Ahouzan

Nzi Ahouzan co-founded SEND Parents Haven and is National Social Care Nurse 2026, a Clinical Lead Nurse, Children and Families Social Work Student, and health, social care, neuroscience and advocacy specialist.

"I am an award-winning health and social care professional with an adult nursing background, currently working as a Clinical Lead Nurse at Swanton Care and studying Children and Families Social Work.

My work sits at the intersection of nursing, social care, safeguarding, advocacy, neuroscience and family wellbeing. I believe people do not experience services in separate boxes. A child, parent, patient, carer or family may need healthcare, social care, emotional support, safeguarding, practical help and a strong voice at the same time.

I was honoured to win Regional South East Social Care Nurse 2025 and National UK Social Care Nurse 2026 at the Great British Care Awards. These awards strengthened my commitment to compassionate leadership, dignity in care, high professional standards and courageous advocacy for people who may feel unheard within complex systems."

Interests and long-term goal

"I am especially passionate about neuroscience, including how brain development, trauma, stress, attachment, mental health, health inequalities and early life experiences shape children, families, adults and communities. For me, neuroscience is not just academic. It helps explain why care must be trauma-informed, evidence-informed, culturally aware and joined up.

Areas of interest

- Joined-up health and social care
- Children, families and safeguarding
- Patient, family and community advocacy
- Neuroscience, trauma-informed practice and human development
- Dignity, equity and culturally aware care
- The voice of frontline professionals in policy

My long-term goal is to contribute to national conversations on health and social care policy, including parliamentary and public policy discussions. I want to bring frontline experience, academic learning and a strong advocacy lens into the rooms where decisions are made."