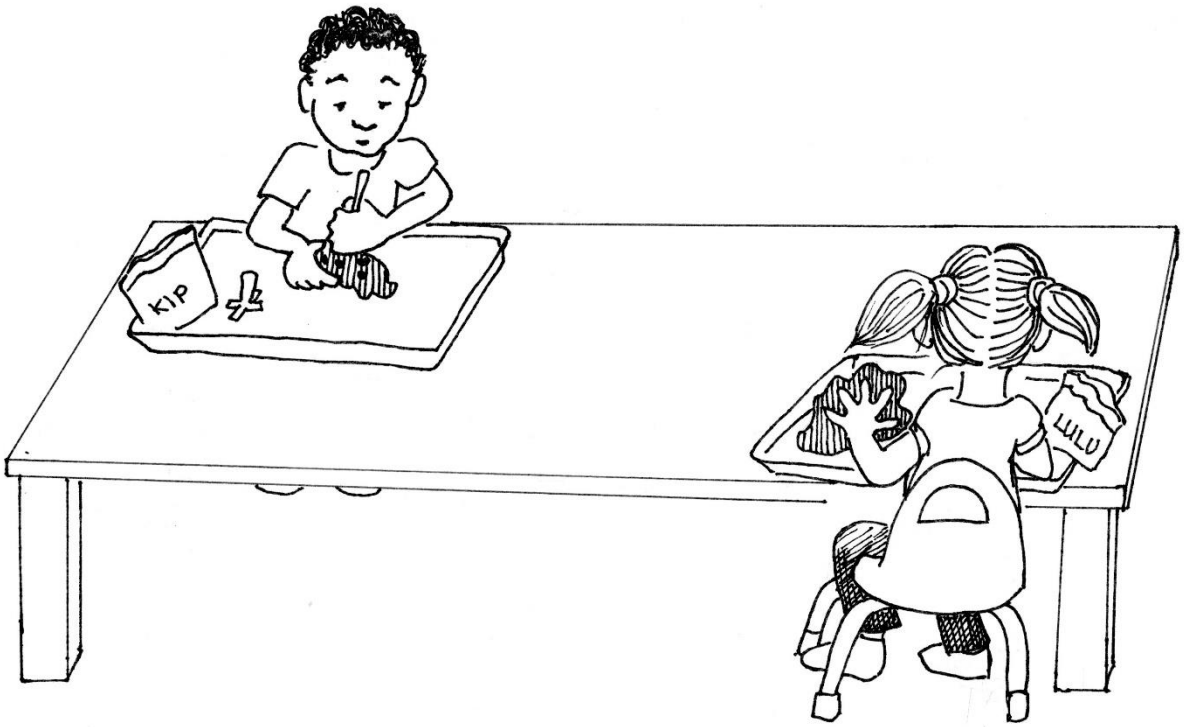
Kip Goes Back to School



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SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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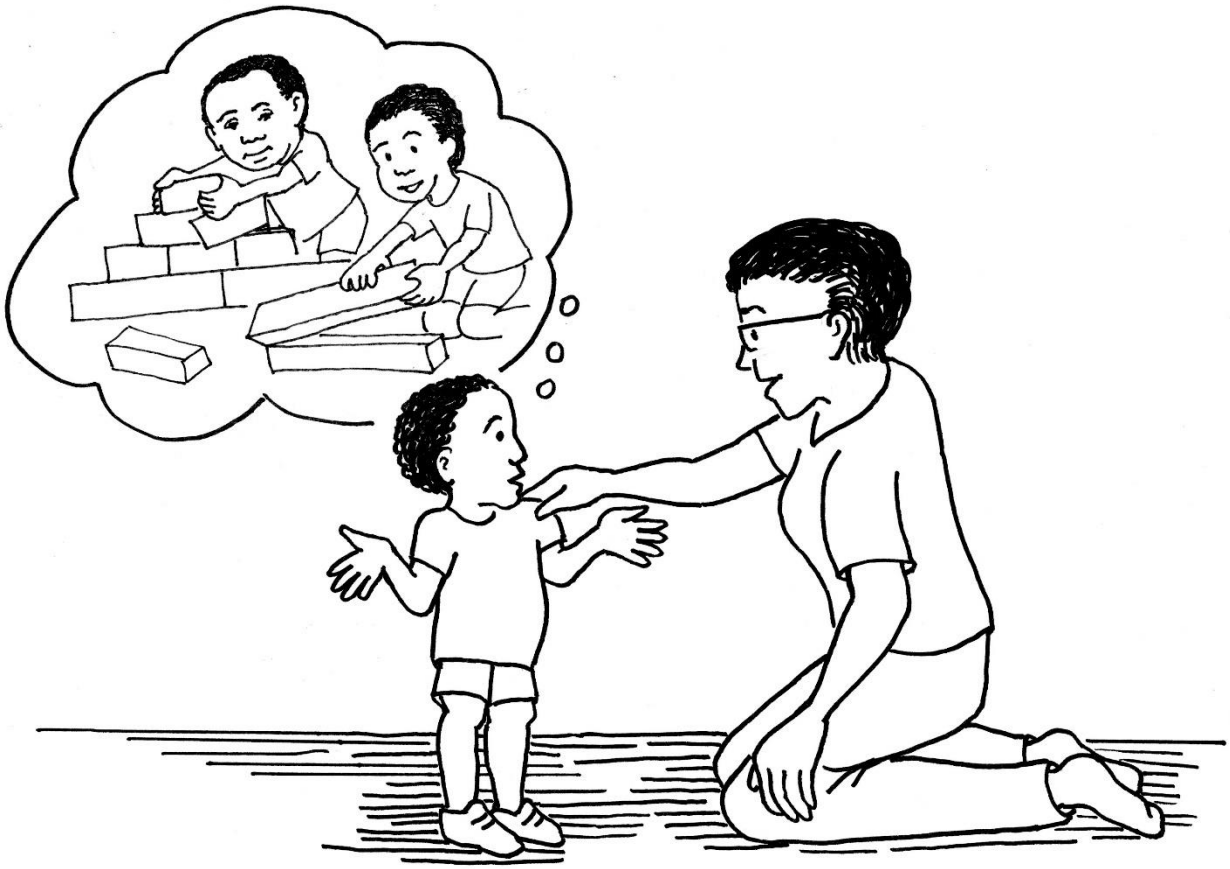
Somerville Family Learning Collaborative

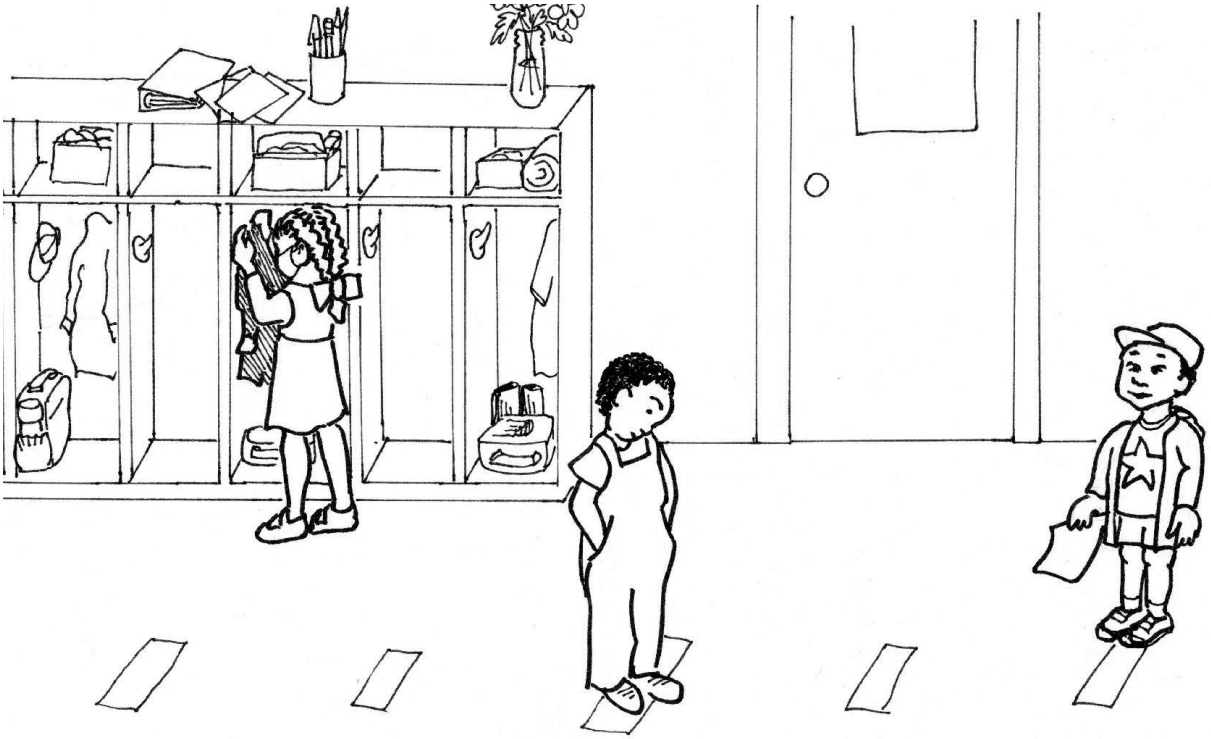
I’m Kip, and I’m 4 ½ years old and I know about a lot of things. Sometimes people think that since I’m just a kid I don’t understand things but that’s not true. I understand blue and yellow makes green. I know that my school closed down a long time ago because of a virus. I was only 4 when that happened. It made me sad and sometimes mad that I had to stay home. I only had my baby sister to play with!



While we were home because of the virus, I missed climbing and building with my best friend Aldo! I missed playing with him and my other friends. I missed my teacher, Monica, too. I even missed rest time (even though I didn't like to stay on my cot all the time!)

My mom told me that when schools opened again there would be lots of things that stay the same, and lots of things that would be different. I felt happy thinking about going back to school. But sometimes I get nervous when I don't know what to expect. I was worried that I wouldn't like it.

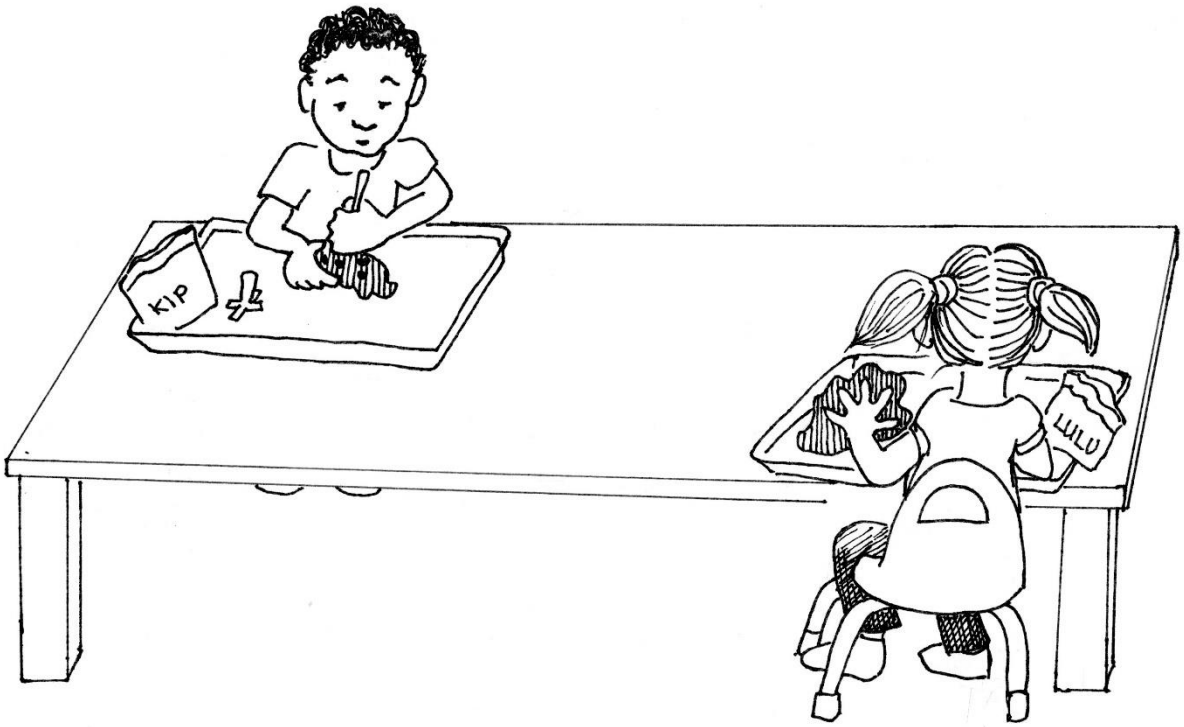
Now school is open again. My teacher Monica is still here. Some of the kids are, too, but not all of them. At least Aldo is back, hurrah! There are lots of changes because of the virus, and lots of things that are kind of the same. It feels confusing sometimes. Getting used to some of the new rules makes me feel tired! Monica said that lots of things are confusing, and even the grown-ups are still learning about the new ways to do things.



I still bring my lunch every day and put it in my cubby. I still have the same cubby with all my extra clothes in it. I keep my jacket and hat in there too. That is the same.

We take turns getting our coats from the cubbies so that we don't get too close to each other. Monica says not getting close is social distancing. When it's time to go outside for a walk, it takes longer for kids to get ready. We stand on new marks on the floor once we are ready to line up. Teachers remind us about social distancing a lot. Those things at school are different.

It feels hard to stand so far away from Aldo. I don't like social distancing. Some days I feel grumpy when we have to wait so long.



When we use playdough, there are lots of tools to cut and shape it with. We each have our own tray to work on at the table. That is all the same.

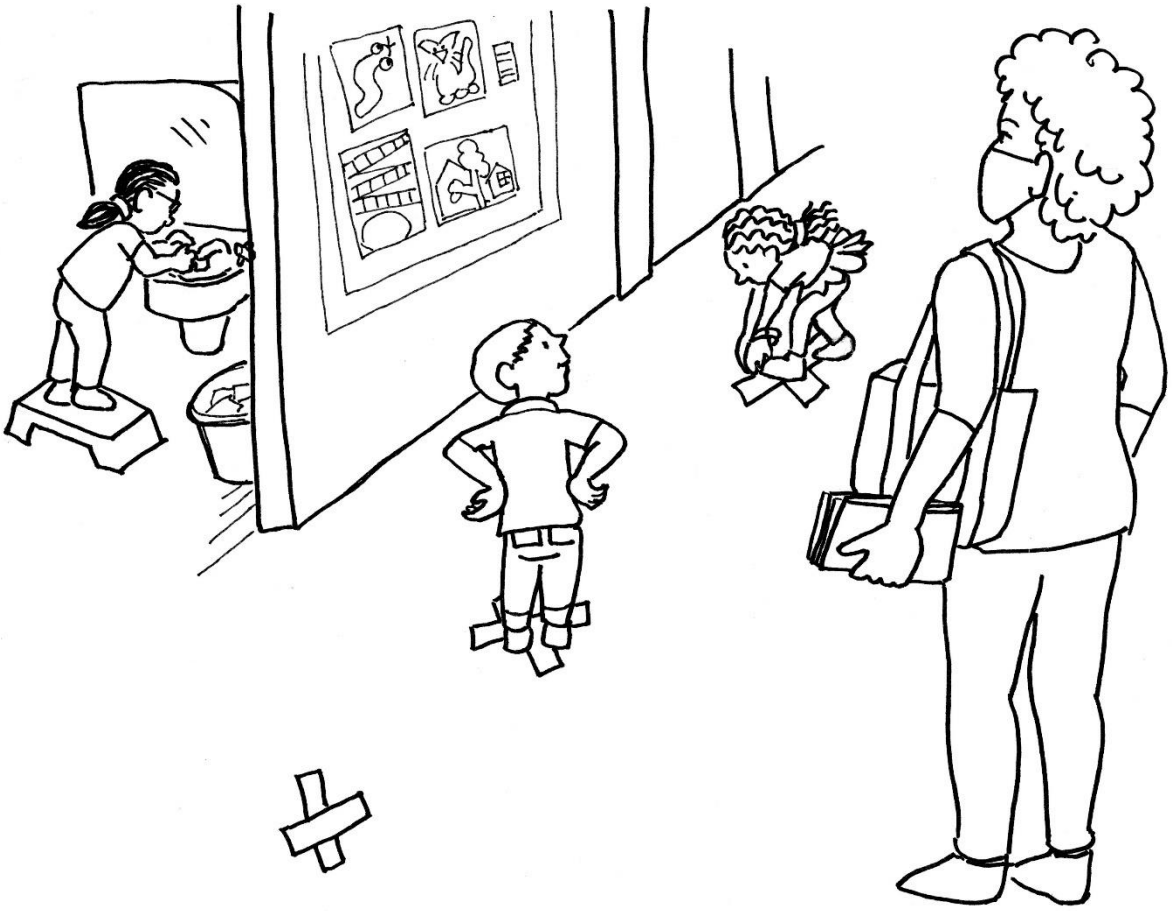
But now we can only have two kids at the table and our seats are far apart. Before the virus, teachers and parents always said sharing was important. Now, everyone has to use ONLY their own tools, but sometimes kids forget. When we finish with the playdough, we put it back in our own zip lock bag with our name on it. No sharing. That is different.

Squishing the dough feels good. Seeing my friend nearby is fun. Sitting far apart and not sharing the dough or the tools feels frustrating.

There are lots of books in my classroom. Kids can read any book they want. Monica reads a story to us while we sit in our special spots. We talk about what we think will happen next in the stories. We learn about lots of different things. Those things are the same.

Aldo and I can't share books like we used to. Now we each have to have our own book because of social distancing. Our special seats are spread out far from each other. These are some more things that are different.

Listening to books with friends feels familiar and good. But I feel sad that I can't share books with my buddy Aldo.



Teachers talk about ways to stay healthy a lot. We wash our hands and rub hard to make lots of bubbles and make sure the germs go down the drain. Monica says that is one of the most important ways to be safe- wash the germs away. If someone has to sneeze or cough, we do it in our elbow. Those things are the same.

We have to stay really far away from other kids, and play alone a lot. When it is time to eat, we have to do more social distancing so kids sit far, far away from each other. Those things are really different and are sometimes really hard.

I wish that we could sit closer so it is easier to talk.

We talk about the daily schedule every day at circle time. We have play time inside, clean up and reading time. We go outside before lunch and have rest when we are done eating. On Wednesdays we have visits from the puppets. On Fridays we take a walk and take turns leading a silly moves march. Those are all the same.

It takes much longer for everyone to do everything! We have to be really careful not to get too close to each other when we are moving around the classroom. If someone forgets and goes too close, Monica says "Remember social distancing!!" Waiting for turns to wash hands and to get a turn at with the trucks takes a long time. All of that feels different.

Even though I like knowing what happens, I feel mad that I have to wait so much. Even when I know what is happening, different can be hard!

Teachers wear masks all day to keep their germs inside the mask, and lots of children try to. It sometimes feels hot and itchy with a mask on. Sometimes I'm not sure who people are because they look so different with a mask. It is hard to figure out what they are feeling when I can't see their whole face.

Lots of grown-ups say that wearing masks is one of the most important things to do right now to be safe. (Just like social distancing and washing hands.) It feels hard to wear them. I feel sad that I can't see my teachers' faces.

Some of the masks are funny, one kid has a kitten face on it and someone else has rainbows. I have one with dinosaurs, and I can put it on all by myself! Monica and the other teachers have pictures of their real faces with no masks that they wear pinned to their shirts so we really know who is who. Teachers help us think about using our eyes and eyebrows to show our feelings instead of our mouths. That is all really different. There is nothing the same about wearing masks!

My teacher helps all the kids in my class. When someone is scared or falls down when we are taking a walk, she helps us feel better. If someone is sick, she helps them rest and calls their family. If we have an accident, she helps us get clean clothes. If we wonder about how tadpoles grow or why people speak different languages, she helps us find out. If we are having big, hard feelings, she helps us calm down and figure out how to solve the problem. If we are feeling happy and excited, she smiles and laughs with us. These are all the same as before the virus.

It feels good to have a teacher who helps and cares. I feel happy that Monica is my teacher.

Social distancing is hard to remember because it means no hugging friends and no touching at all. Monica plays a game with us. We think of different ways to say hello and good-bye and everyone tries doing the different ideas. Sometimes we do a regular wave, sometimes we do double waves or flying waves. Aldo and I like to do toe bumps when we are saying “Bye” at the end of the day. Izzy has really curly hair and does a head shake wave. I like watching that!

Learning new ways to do things is sometimes fun. I really like some of the silly ones and show them to my family when we get home. My baby sister likes Izzy’s head shake hello!

Monica and my mom say that we will not always have to do things differently because of the virus. They say “remember, some of these new things are just for now, not forever.” Some can be fun. Yesterday, Aldo and I were at two sinks next to each other and we had a bubble race to see who could make the most bubbles while we washed our hands. We laughed and laughed together.

I feel happy when I think about that.

The End