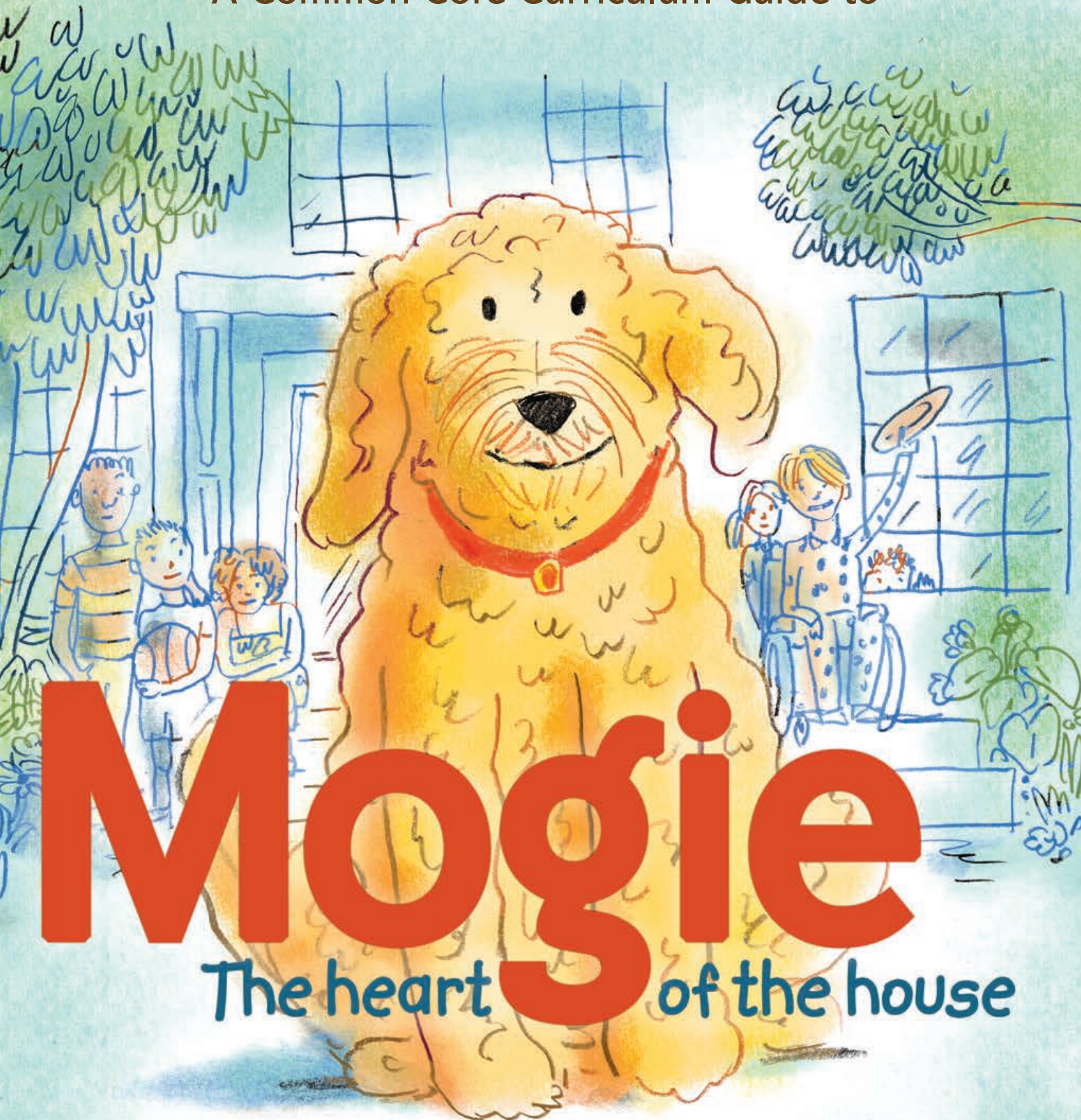


A Common Core Curriculum Guide to



Moggie

The heart of the house

by Kathi Appelt *illustrated by* Marc Rosenthal

Summary

Mogie, “a ball-chasing, tail-wagging, moon-howling pup,” is the perfect addition to the Ronald McDonald House in Houston, where he comforts and entertains sick children and their families. Although Mogie was not suited for work as a service dog, a search-and-rescue dog, or being groomed for the show ring, he is the ideal companion for children staying at the house because he knows just what to do to comfort a child. That’s why he’s known as “the heart of the house.”

Background Information

The Ronald McDonald House in Houston provides a home away from home for sick children and their families. This fifty-bedroom house, which opened in September 1997, serves families with children facing a life-threatening condition, including cancer or the need for an organ transplant. During their stay at the house, families are provided with a place to stay, meals, laundry facilities, transportation to and from hospitals, and other services.

To learn more about the Ronald McDonald House in Houston, visit their website at RMHHouston.org. Here you can download a letter from Mogie, the Key Comfort Ambassador of the house, and six photographs of him. You can also find out more about the history of the house. For even more pictures of Mogie, check out the Houston Chronicle at Chron.com/Life/Pets/Gallery/Mogie-of-Ronald-McDonald-House-20107.php.



Discussion Questions/Activities

Key Ideas and Details

The activities below emphasize the following Common Core State Standards:
(RI.K–3.1, 2, 3)

1. **A VERY SPECIAL HOUSE.** The book *Mogie: The Heart of the House* opens with this sentence: “Right smack in the heart of the Big City is a very special house.” The rest of the book explains why the house is so special. To focus on this idea, have students fill in the chart below, telling what is special about each of the following:

- Families who stay there
- Children who stay there
- Mogie, the dog who lives there

Encourage the students to use both words and pictures. This can be done as a class chart, or each child can work on a separate chart.

<i>A Special House</i>		
Families Who Stay in the House Why are the families who stay in the house special?	Children Who Stay in the House Why are the children who stay in the house special? Gage: Antonia:	Mogie, the Dog Who Lives in the House Why is Mogie special?

Discussion Questions/Activities

2. **CONNECTING EVENTS.** Gage's, Antonia's, and Mogie's lives all changed over time. In the boxes below, sketch and write about each life before coming to the special house and then during the stay at the special house. For Gage, tell what happened after he left the special house. Then underneath each sketch, write down information about each life. Have children share their work, explaining how their words and pictures show changes in Gage's, Antonia's, and Mogie's lives.

	Before	During	After
GAGE			

	Before	During
ANTONIA		

	Before	During
MOGIE		



3. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.** Discuss the questions below, and ask children to suggest additional questions for discussion.

- What is special about the house? What other words describe the house? Explain.
- Tell how Gage (1) came to the house, (2) stayed there until he got better, and (3) then was ready to leave.
- Why is Mogie the heart of the house? How does he show that he cares about the children?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the importance of integrating information from the words and the illustrations. The activities below reflect this standard:

RL.K–3.7 Describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear. Use illustrations and details to describe character, setting, or events.

4. **LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.** In many books, the illustrations not only match information given in the words, they extend it. By carefully examining information provided in the illustrations in *Mogie*, students develop their comprehension skills.

Directions: Study the two-page spreads below. Each one has information about Mogie and Gage. After reading the words, look carefully at the illustrations. What information is provided in the words? What additional information is provided in the pictures?

A. Mogie did not succeed as a service dog, a search-and rescue dog, or a show ring dog.

Information Provided in the Words:

Information Provided in the Pictures:



B. Mogie made a beeline for Gage.

Information Provided in the Words:

Information Provided in the Pictures:

When he walked through the doors of the very special house, he did not notice the high-to-the-sky ceilings and large, cushy sofas.



He could care less about the well-stocked library and the big, big kitchen.



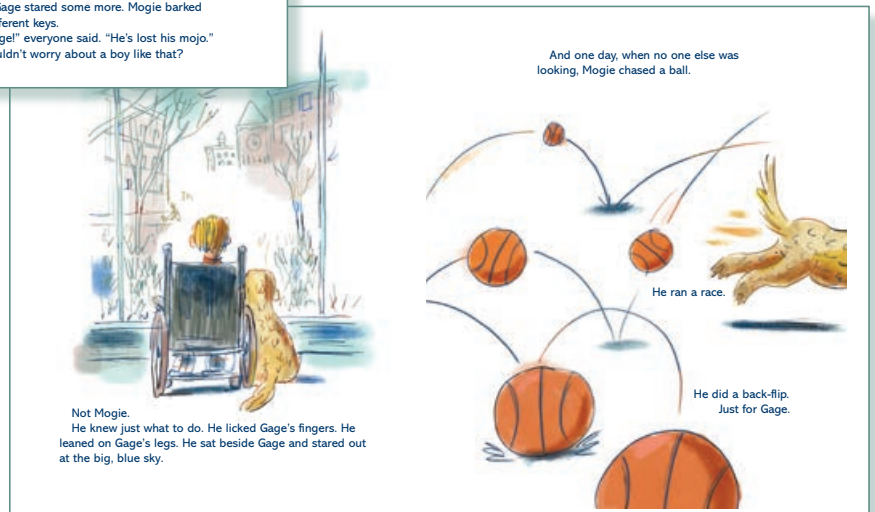
Instead Mogie made a beeline for . . . Gage. "Arf!" he barked.

He barely sniffed the indoor tree house and the enormous fireplace. He completely ignored the rules.

C. Mogie tries to lift Gage's spirits and make him feel better.

Information Provided in the Words:

Information Provided in the Pictures:



D. Gage remembers the past. Mogie dreams of Gage's future.

Information Provided in the Words:

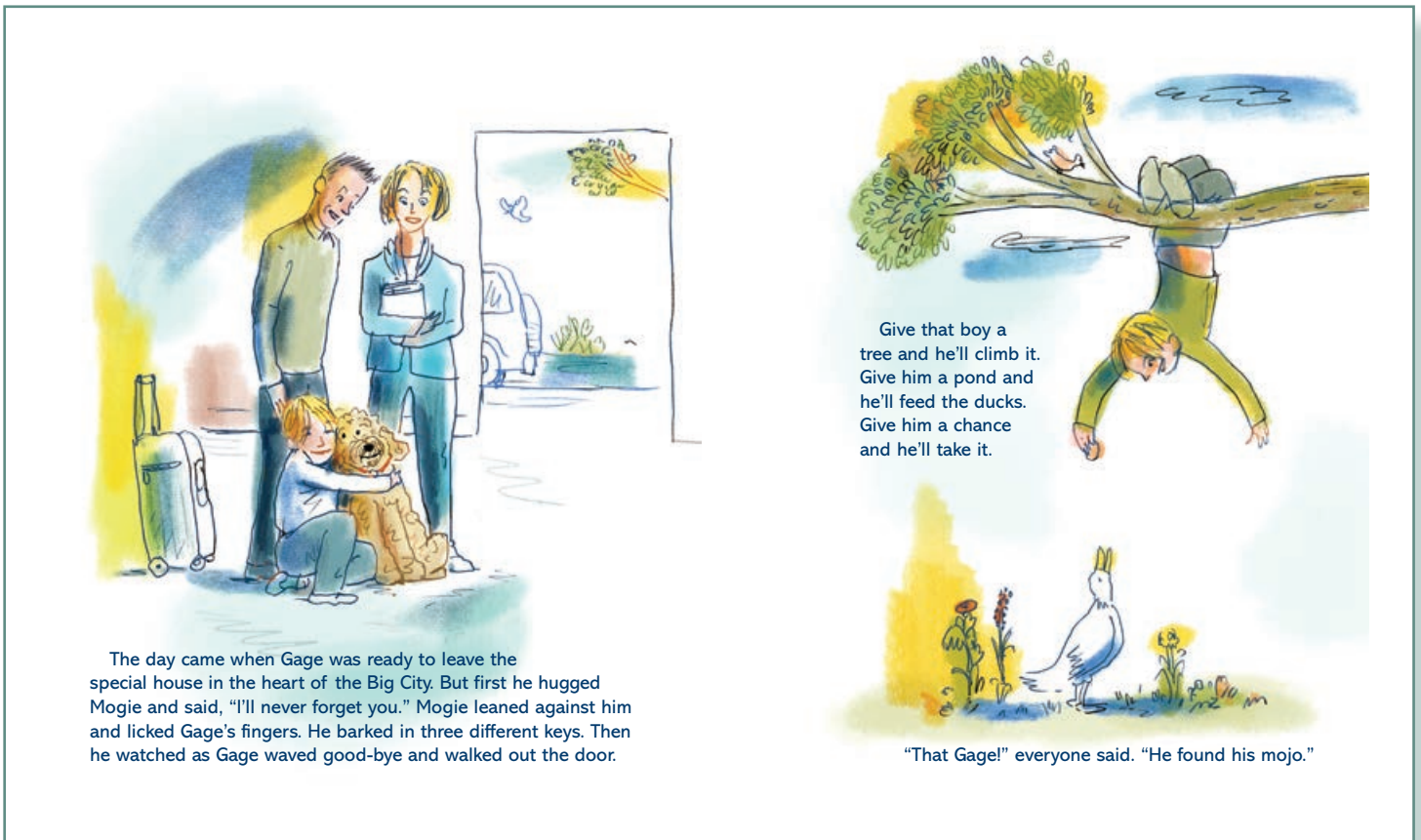
Information Provided in the Pictures:



E. Gage says good-bye to Mogie and resumes his regular activities.

Information Provided in the Words:

Information Provided in the Pictures:



Craft and Structure

The activities below focus on style of writing and vocabulary development. They address the following Common Core State Standards:

RL.1–3.4 Identify and describe how words and phrases in stories suggest feelings and appeal to the senses.

RI.K–3.4 Ask and answer questions to determine the meaning of words or phrases in a text.

5. **Sentence Crafting.** Help students write interesting sentences like the ones author Kathi Appelt uses in the book *Mogie*. Follow these steps.

A. Ask the students what they notice about the way the author describes Gage, Mogie, and Antonia in the examples below:

“Gage was once a ball-chasing, race-running, back-flipping boy.”

“Mogie was a ball-chasing, tail-wagging, moon-howling pup.”

“Antonia was once a toe-dancing, jump-roping, cartwheel-spinning girl.”

B. Make a chart to list these noticings. Include ideas such as these:

Noticings

1. The author gives us three different descriptions of Gage, Mogie, and Antonia.
2. Each description has a hyphen.
3. Each description ends in –ing.
4. Each description tells what the person does.

C. After examining the examples, create a few sentences together as a class or group. Write about a student, a favorite teacher, or a favorite character in a book. Then challenge the students to write and illustrate descriptions of themselves, using the sentence examples as a guide. Here are a few examples to get you started:

I am a soccer-playing, book-reading, pet-loving girl.

I am a bike-riding, mystery-loving, movie-watching boy.



6. Determining Word Meaning.

Have the students use context clues and illustrations to figure out the meanings of the underlined words below. Encourage the students to tell how they figured out the meaning of each word. What clues helped them figure it out?

A. Give Gage a tune and he'd make up silly rhymes for it. Give Gage a windy day and he'd fly a kite. Give Gage a beach and he'd build a sand castle that scraped the sky.

"That Gage!" everyone said. "He's got mojo!"

B. Meanwhile, not too far away, there was a cozy house. It had a tiny bedroom with a boxful of chew toys. It had a nice warm kitchen. And guess what else it had?

Puppies! A passel of puppies.

C. Antonia was once a toe-dancing, jump-roping, cartwheel-spinning girl. "That Antonia," everyone said. "She's lost her cha-cha-cha."

Mogie's work is cut out for him.

Writing

The Common Core State Standards emphasize writing opinion pieces beginning in the primary grades:

W.K–3.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

7. Writing an Opinion of the Book *Mogje: The Heart of the House*.

Ask the students to write their opinions of the book. Explain and review the following steps:

A. Name the book you read and tell what the book is about.

B. Give your opinion of the book.

C. Give a reason for your opinion.

D. End in an interesting way.

8. Write a Poem of Address.

Imagine you could ask Mogie some questions and he would answer them for you. Make a list of these questions and Mogie's imagined answers.

Here's a short example:

Mogie, what do you like best?
I like being with children,
being the heart of the house,
cuddling and caring.

Mogie, how do you want the children to be?
I want them to have
MOJO
and
CHA, CHA, CHA.
I want them to go home happy.



9. Writing About Pets.

- Do you have a pet that is the heart of your house? Draw a picture of your pet and tell how your pet makes you feel.
- Check out the many different breeds of dogs at DogBreedsList.info/All-Dog-Breeds/#.U6Zxnr-C2bl. Download pictures of two or more dogs. Then write about why each dog would or would not be a good partner for Mogie to have in the special house. Consider the following questions:
 - Is the dog friendly with kids?
 - Is the dog intelligent?
 - Is the dog easy to train?
 - Does the dog get along with other dogs?
- Make an acrostic poem about Mogie. Use the letters of Mogie's name to begin each line. Before you begin writing, brainstorm a list of words that describe Mogie and the work he does at the special house.

Here is an example of an acrostic poem:

Moving into the special house
One dog made a difference
Giving a boy back his mojo
Interesting him in throwing balls and running races
Eventually moving on to another kiddo

For an online tool that students can use to write acrostic poems, go to the ReadWriteThink website at ReadWriteThink.org/Classroom-Resources/Student-Interactives/Acrostic-Poems-30045.html.

Expanding the Experience

10. Learning More About Labradoodles.

Mogie is a labradoodle—part Labrador Retriever and part Poodle. Find out more about Labradoodles by watching the videos below on the Animal Planet website:

- [Dogs 101: Labradoodle](#)
AnimalPlanet.com/tv-shows/dogs-101/videos/labradoodle.htm
- [Labradoodles First Swim:](#)
<http://www.animalplanet.com/TV-Shows/Too-Cute/Videos/Labradoodles-First-Swim.htm>

Read more about Labradoodles by visiting these websites:

- [Labradoodle Information: The Best of Both Worlds at PhilipCrammond.com/Labradoodle/Common_questions.htm.](#)
Students can use the question-and-answer format used on this website as a model for researching and answering their own questions about Labradoodles or other dogs.
- [Pet Guide: Labradoodle at PetGuide.com/Breeds/Dog/Labradoodle/.](#)
Get more information about Labradoodles—the food, diet, training, and more.

A Note to Teachers: When Children Who Have Had Cancer Return to School

Children like Gage and Antonia—the children mentioned in the book—return to school after spending time away. Perhaps they were at a place like the Ronald McDonald House or in the hospital being treated for cancer. Our challenge as teachers is to ease these children back into the classroom routine, to answer their classmates' questions, and to provide a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

Returning to school should be a happy occasion for children who have had a serious illness. Going to school means a return to normal—a return to friends, to a regular schedule, and to learning new things. But returning to school can also be a source of anxiety. A child might wonder: How will the other children treat me? What questions will they ask me? Will they tease me or exclude me? How can I explain what happened to me?

Teachers can help by suggesting things children can do to help a classmate who is dealing with cancer:

- When a child is in the hospital or at home, call or email to stay in touch.
- Make posters and cards to decorate the child's room.
- Make a book of pictures, games, puzzles, and stories and send it to the child.
- Before a classmate returns, brainstorm ways to welcome him or her.
- When the classmate returns, include him or her in activities.

When talking with children, you may find that they are confused. They want answers to questions like:

- Why has my friend been out of school for so long?
- Will he or she look different?
- Is cancer contagious? How did my classmate get cancer? Will it go away?

Health care professionals can help by providing guidance and information. There is also a great deal of information available on the web. Some helpful websites for teachers to consult are:

- [MDAnderson Cancer Center](http://MDAnderson.org/Patient-and-Cancer-Information/Care-Centers-and-Clinics/Childrens-Cancer-Hospital/Index.html?)
MDAnderson.org/Patient-and-Cancer-Information/Care-Centers-and-Clinics/Childrens-Cancer-Hospital/Index.html?
- [The American Cancer Society](http://Cancer.org)
Cancer.org
- [Cure Search for Children's Cancer](http://Curesearch.org/Returning-to-School/)
Curesearch.org/Returning-to-School/
- [Dana Farber Cancer Institute](http://Dana-Farber.org/Health-Library/Back-to-School-Program-Helps-Young-Cancer-Patients-Return-to-Class.aspx)
Dana-Farber.org/Health-Library/Back-to-School-Program-Helps-Young-Cancer-Patients-Return-to-Class.aspx
- [Leukemia and Lymphoma Society](http://LLS.org)
LLS.org
- [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](http://MSKCC.org/Pediatrics/Returning-School-After-Treatment)
MSKCC.org/Pediatrics/Returning-School-After-Treatment

Above all, by working with children, their families, and health care professionals, we can contribute to the well-being of children returning to school after an illness. We can create a caring and welcoming environment.



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Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020
TEACH.SimonandSchuster.net • Kids.SimonandSchuster.com

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