

THE
ULTIMATE
FIRST WEEK OF
SCHOOL
SURVIVAL KIT

**You Can Do
Hard Things**



Everything Teachers Need for a
Smooth, Organized, Stress-Free Start

by Melba Ande

Teacher to CEO Blueprint



A Note from Melba

Friend, the first week of school doesn't have to be chaos. I know it can feel like you're juggling a hundred things at once — setting up your classroom, learning 30 new names, managing nerves (yours AND theirs), communicating with parents, and somehow keeping it all together with a smile.

This Survival Kit was built for **you** — the teacher who wants to start the year with intention, confidence, and a plan. Whether this is your first year or your fifteenth, these tools will help you walk in on Day 1 feeling ready.

You can do hard things. Now let's make this your best first week yet. ■

— Melba Ande

Founder, Teacher to CEO Blueprint Educator · Coach · Your Biggest Cheerleader

What's Inside This Kit

■	Master Checklist	Everything to do before, during, and after Day 1
■	Classroom Setup Guide	Room arrangement, supply list, and display tips
■	Day-by-Day Planner	A structured plan for each day of Week 1
■	Student Info Tracker	Get to know your students fast
■	Parent Communication Toolkit	Welcome letter, contact log, and call scripts
■	Classroom Procedures Guide	The routines that make the rest of the year smooth
■	Teacher Self-Care Reminder	Because you matter too

■ SECTION 1 — MASTER CHECKLIST

Your First Week Game Plan

■ BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

- Organize your classroom — zones for learning, storage, and display
- Print and laminate classroom labels and signs
- Prepare your first-day welcome slide or anchor chart
- Set up your grade book / digital platform (Google Classroom, Canvas, etc.)
- Write and send your welcome letter to parents/guardians
- Learn how to pronounce every student's name
This takes 15 minutes. Worth every second.
- Prepare your 'About Me' for students
- Review your school's discipline and emergency procedures
- Prepare student info sheets / icebreaker activities
- Rest, eat well, and go to bed early the night before
You cannot pour from an empty cup.

■ DAY 1

- Arrive 30 minutes early — greet students at the door with a smile
- Run your classroom tour and introductions activity
- Teach and practice 2–3 key classroom procedures today only
- Share your classroom rules collaboratively — let students contribute
- Send home Day 1 parent form or digital survey
- Note any students who need extra support, quiet check-ins, or ELL services
- End the day with a positive close — celebration or reflection

■ DAYS 2-5

- Reinforce procedures every single day - consistency is everything
- Begin relationship-building activities and class community builders
- Begin collecting completed parent info forms
- Do your first informal student check-in - index card or emoji exit ticket
- Identify your room setup is working - adjust if needed
- Connect personally with at least 5 students each day
- Reflect each evening - what worked and what needs adjustment

■ MELBA'S TIP

Write 3 student names each morning to intentionally connect with that day. By Friday you'll know everyone.

■ SECTION 2 — CLASSROOM SETUP GUIDE

Your Classroom is Your Students' Second Home

Research shows that the physical environment directly impacts student behavior, focus, and sense of belonging. Set it up with intention.

■ Room Arrangement

- Create clear sight lines — you should be able to see every student from any point
- Arrange desks for flexibility: rows for direct instruction, clusters for collaboration
- Designate a calm/reset corner (a bean bag, books, stress tools)
- Keep high-traffic areas (pencil sharpener, trash, door) away from learning zones
- Your teacher desk should NOT be the focal point — your board should be

■ Displays & Decor

- Keep walls clean on Day 1 — fill them with student work over Week 1
- Post your classroom rules, schedule, and expectations prominently
- Create a 'Our Class Community' or 'All About Us' display to add names as you go
- Use your brand colors (cream, navy, gold) for a warm, professional feel
- Label everything — cubbies, supply bins, shelves — students thrive on clear systems

■ Supply Checklist

- Pencils, erasers, markers — one container per table group
- Printed name tags or table cards for Week 1
- Hand sanitizer and tissues at each cluster
- A teacher toolbox: stapler, tape, scissors, sticky notes, dry-erase markers
- One 'emergency sub folder' ready on Day 1 — always
- A personal teacher bag with water bottle, snacks, and your planner

■ MELBA'S TIP

Take a photo of your finished classroom setup — you'll want to remember this moment every year.

SECTION 3 — DAY-BY-DAY PLANNER

Your Week 1 Blueprint

DAY 1 — MONDAY

Theme: Set the Tone

Morning	Welcome students at the door. Classroom tour. 'Find your seat' activity.
Mid-Morning	Icebreaker: 'Two Truths & a Wish' or 'All About Me' index card.
Afternoon	Introduce and PRACTICE 2 key procedures (lining up, asking for help).
Close	Positive close: highlight one amazing thing you noticed today.

DAY 2 — TUESDAY

Theme: Build Routines

Morning	Review Day 1 procedures. Add one new one. Celebrate compliance publicly.
Mid-Morning	Community builder activity. Begin learning names with a game.
Afternoon	Introduce your schedule. Walk through what a normal day looks like.
Close	Emoji exit ticket: How are you feeling? (Show of hands or sticky notes.)

DAY 3 — WEDNESDAY

Theme: Go Deeper

Morning	Morning meeting or circle time. Build belonging intentionally.
Mid-Morning	Collaborative class project: create classroom norms together.
Afternoon	First 'academic' activity — low-stakes, confidence-building.
Close	Personal note or sticker to 5 students who showed great character.

DAY 4 — THURSDAY

Theme: Reinforce & Connect

Morning Check: Are procedures holding? Re-teach any that feel shaky.

Mid-Morning Student 'interest survey' — What do you love? What do you need from me?

Afternoon Partner or small group activity. Watch social dynamics.

Close Write one strength you noticed about each student this week.

DAY 5 — FRIDAY

Theme: Celebrate Week 1

Morning Reflection activity: What did we learn? What are you proud of?

Mid-Morning Share out and celebrate. Read-aloud or class video if time allows.

Afternoon Preview next week — build anticipation, not anxiety.

Close YOU DID IT. Take 5 minutes to journal what went well this week.

SECTION 4 — PARENT COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

Start the Year With Parents on Your Side

The teacher-parent relationship sets the tone for the entire year. Reach out first, reach out warmly, and keep communication consistent. Parents who feel included are your greatest allies.

Welcome Letter Template

Dear [Student Name]'s Family,

Welcome to [Grade/Subject]! I am so excited to be your child's teacher this year, and I wanted to reach out personally before we even begin.

My name is **Melba Ande**, and I believe that every child deserves a teacher who sees them, celebrates them, and challenges them to grow. That's my promise to your family.

A few things to know: I believe in open communication. Please don't hesitate to reach me at [email/phone]. I will always respond within 24–48 hours.

I'm looking forward to an incredible year together.

With warmth,

Ms./Mr. [Your Name]

Parent Contact Log

Date	Parent/Guardian	Student	Contact Method	Purpose	Follow-Up

■ SECTION 5 — TEACHER SELF-CARE REMINDER

You Matter Too, Teacher

"You cannot pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first."

■ Sleep is non-negotiable

Aim for 7–8 hours during the first week. Exhaustion is the enemy of great teaching.

■ Eat real food

Pack lunch and snacks. The vending machine is not a meal. Fuel your brain.

■ Stay hydrated

Teachers talk ALL day. Keep a water bottle on your desk and actually use it.

■ Build in a 5-minute reset

After students leave, sit in silence for 5 minutes before you check email or clean up.

■ Journal one win daily

Write one thing that went well every day this week. Your brain needs evidence that you're doing great.



■ Say no to taking work home every night

Pick 2 work-at-home nights maximum. Your home is your sanctuary, not your second classroom.

■ Set a phone cutoff time

No school emails after 8pm. You deserve mental space. Boundaries are professional.

■ Ask for help

You don't have to figure it all out alone. Your colleagues, your coach, and this community are here.

