



Series 2. Episode 8  
Turning *Little Stones* show notes.  
Caroline is guest on the *Calm & Connected* Podcast, hosted by Janine Halloran

Episode 8  
**A Conversation about School Readiness**  
with Caroline Allen and Janine Halloran

Janine Halloran hosts a popular podcast in the United States, called **Calm & Connected**. In this episode, she talks to Caroline Allen about the transition between pre-school to elementary (primary) school. We are grateful to Janine and have her permission to publish this topical and relevant podcast on Turning Little Stones.

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### *An anxious time!*

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This period between applying for schools whilst waiting to hear the outcome is an anxious time for everyone. There are many unknowns and yet parents, practitioners and teachers need to prepare children for this next step.

A symptom of children being infected by uncertainty and anxiety might be described as

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### *Transitionitis*

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To her knowledge 'transitionitis', coined by Caroline, describes this period of uncertainty (typically January to March). School applications are in; the child knows that there is change ahead; BUT they don't yet know what/where/how it will be. They DO know that everyone is talking about. It must be a big deal.

Typical the symptoms are when the child regresses to previously 'baby' behaviours (whining, playing with toddler toys, playing up, toileting accidents, resisting the activities that they previously found fun).

Curiously these symptoms often disappear soon after the first school visit! And this makes sense. The unknown is now known. They have met their new teacher, seen their new classroom, played with some of the activities...

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### *Some things change; some things are unchanged...*

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Just because **something** may be different (changed), it does not mean that **everything** will! Many things will be familiar. At school (just as at pre-school), there will also be story time, snack time, playtime, home time.

And so, to help our young children manage the uncertainty of imminent change for our young children, we can simply focus on things that will be unchanged.

Our job as adults is to help children see that the things they enjoy (a favourite book, activity, song) is something they are likely to enjoy at school. Children need to hook their experiences onto something tangible. Caroline explains how simply taking a small group of children for a walk around a local school can make 'school' meaningful for every child. They might see a sand tray in the playground (just like at nursery), talk about whether the children might sing a favourite rhyme in school (like we do), wonder what they were having for snack



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(would it be our favourite?) These can be natural and easy ways to focus on the familiar – some things that are unchanged.

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### *Skills needed ahead of starting school.*

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There are many myths about which skills and knowledge are needed to start school. Do children **really** need to be able to read, write, count to...???

Rather than put pressure on to learn skills and acquire knowledge, it is far better that our children become confident, sociable, able to focus...

There are simple ways to value what children *are* doing and reframe it in a different context.

*"What a lovely time you've spent playing and sharing toys... Your friends at school are going to love playing with you!"*

*"You love that story and listened so well. I think your teacher is going to love reading stories to you!"*

Children have unique fascinations and interests. When we build on them and follow their lines of enquiry, they will be learning *and* (more importantly) be developing their love for learning.

### Introducing *Delving a Little Deeper*

Janine asks about *Delving a Little Deeper*, a resource for those wanting a little more theory.

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#### **1. Getting to Know You & 2. See Me!**

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To access these two sets (& more coming soon), head over to [www.turninglittlestones.co.uk](http://www.turninglittlestones.co.uk) where audios and Companion Notes can be found to aid and resource everyone with little people in their lives - practitioners and family carers, students and managers...

*This podcast (and many more) can also be found on the Calm & Connected podcast*  
<https://www.janinehalloran.com/podcast/calm-and-connected>

Also available to watch on youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu-F1TFJ0hk&list=PLJdq3OzEoR1hyLskFs5K28b-ulxZlmgUO&index=1>



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### *Janine's Bio*

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*Janine Halloran is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor who has been working with children, teens, and their families for over 20 years. She has been helping children and teens build their coping skills throughout her career in a variety of settings, including schools, mental health clinics and in her private practice. She founded Coping Skills for Kids to help children and teens learn healthy and safe ways to manage big feelings. She has written several books, including the bestselling Coping Skills for Kids Workbook, the Coping Skills for Teens Workbook and the Social Skills for Kids Workbook. She is also the host of the Calm & Connected Podcast and the founder of the Coping Skills Community Hub. Her work has been featured in the Boston Globe, CNN, Huffington Post, and The Skimm® Newsletter. Janine lives in Massachusetts with her husband and two children.*

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### *Janine's Resources*

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Coping Skills for Kids Free Toolkit: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/newsletter>

Coping Skills Community Hub: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/hub>

Instagram: @copingskillsforkids

Facebook: [facebook.com/copingskillsforkids](https://facebook.com/copingskillsforkids) and [facebook.com/encourageplay](https://facebook.com/encourageplay)

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/JanineHalloranEncouragePlay>

*Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through,*

***Turning Little Stones podcasts &***

***Delving a little Deeper (Set 1 Getting to Know You & Set 2 (See Me!))***

See website [www.turninglittlestones.co.uk](http://www.turninglittlestones.co.uk) for details