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“Teachers Worry, Too”

By Katherine LaMaster

Cries of children scared of school
Devastation to my ears
Strange surroundings, language lost
Who can understand their fears?

Classmates stare, curious and kind
Confusion courses through the room
They want to fit in, want to play
Will lack of English be their doom?

Teacher nerves are just as active
I want to help yet don't know how
Try to talk, motion and smile
I'll find a way, to them I vow

Parents dazed, wanting to help
Mothers crying and fathers working
Desperate to make a good impression
Future hopes and dreams are lurking

Researching homelands and cultures
Scrambling to learn their greetings
Attempt words in new languages
Make friends in morning meetings

Start fresh each morning, hug and smile
Show the families that I care
Admit mistakes, work together
Prejudice isn't everywhere



Katherine LaMaster is an early childhood teacher in Charleston, South Carolina with a Master's in Literacy. She served in the Peace Corps in Honduras before returning home to teach kindergarten at a primary Hispanic school. For the past seven years, she has taught first grade in a school that has afforded her the opportunity of working with many English Learners from around the world, which has inspired her to learn more about teaching emergent bilinguals.