

# Looking to the Angry Birds for a graduation explanation

As we were driving to school, I noticed that Leo had his thumb in his mouth. He was worried and I could guess what was on his mind: his Pre-K graduation.



“Are you thinking about graduation?” I asked.

“Yes,” he said. “Mama, what does graduation mean?”

What does Pre-K graduation mean? Not much in the grand scheme of things. Leo’s certificate will never be anything more than a memento. It’s mainly a reason to see how cute your child is in a cap, for the parents to sit there with lumps in their throats (and tears in their eyes), and for the students to realize that a big change is coming.

I was trying to figure out how to explain graduation to our 5-year-old. I offered a few different explanations, but I could tell he didn’t understand.



Then I had an idea.

“What happens when you win a level in Angry Birds?” I asked.

Leo responded immediately. “You get three stars and then you move to the next level.”

That is what graduation is like, I told him. You get a certificate and they tell you that you can move on to the next level.

“But Mama,” he said, “in Angry Birds, the next level is harder.”

“It’s the same in kindergarten,” I said. “It will be harder, but it will still be fun.”



And he got it. I could see him relax a little. It made just a little more sense. And his mother had just compared kindergarten to an iPad game.

Leo survived his graduation. So did his parents. Afterward, we celebrated with a picnic—complete with stomp rockets and our first snowballs of the season.



Now that the certificate has been signed and the cap has been tossed aside, it’s official. Time is flying faster than a catapulted Angry Bird, and our little boy is rocketing up to the next level.

