

Saying goodbye to preschool

Today our younger son graduates from preschool.

It's really not a big deal.

I mean, it's preschool.

He's learned his letters and his numbers. He can draw a fantastic truck. He is a master pumper on those swings. And he knows every school rule—and sometimes follows them.



Preschool is preschool. It's a starting point. Every preschooler graduates eventually.

Besides, our little guy is ready for kindergarten. He's going to his brother's school next year, and he is excited—and maybe a little nervous.

He doesn't want to leave his friends, though they are leaving too. We talk about all the new friends he'll have in his new school.

"I'm not going to make any new friends," he tells me adamantly. So we talk about how hard it is to leave friends behind—but how we can stay in touch. He's not so sure. Neither am I.



Because the truth is that while he may be uncertain, I know I am not ready to leave his school behind. His teachers are my friends, friends I have seen every day for more than three years. They know our family intimately. Our little guy tells them everything, and what he doesn't say, I share myself during hasty drop-offs and pick-ups that turn into much longer conversations.

People talk about not wanting strangers to raise their children—and I used to think that too—but the teachers at our son's daycare are not strangers. They are more like extended family. They are educators who love our children. They adore them. They celebrate their successes. They know how to talk us through the challenges.

Maybe they can talk me through this one. The challenge in saying goodbye to our preschool family.

Or maybe they can help me with what I really need, coming to grips with the fact that our baby boy is growing up. And one day he'll be graduating from something much bigger, much more significant.



Not like today. This is just preschool graduation.

It's really not a big deal.

Really, it's not.

I'd better pack some tissues.