



Debra Jones

# Letting My Butterflies Go

## Helping Children Move on to Kindergarten

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Every year in late spring, our class watches as caterpillars become pupa, then turn into butterflies. We release them outdoors during the last week of the school year. This activity symbolizes the children's growth during the past year and the new adventures that will lie ahead when they go to kindergarten.

Saying good-bye to a class of preschoolers is emotional for all involved—children, teachers, and families. The process begins in spring as children start talking about their summer plans and what lies ahead. Preparation for this important transition needs to unfold gently with increasing emphasis as the last day of the program year approaches. This article provides activities and tips that can help everyone say meaningful good-byes and move on to experience success in kindergarten and beyond.

### Helping children

At the end of the school year, teachers can help children move on in many ways, whether they are off to kindergarten in a new school or the next class in the same program.

#### ... Cope with feelings

**■ Acknowledge your feelings and the children's feelings about moving on to kindergarten.** Let the children know you will miss them and that they are welcome to come back and visit.

**■ Offer familiar activities, such as using playdough and hammering at the workbench, that let children release tension.**