



## Saying Goodbye: End-of-Year Transitions

Saying goodbye at the end of the year can be tough on everyone—children, teachers, caregivers, and parents. With some thoughtful planning, you can turn the end-of-the-year transition into a positive process that leaves everyone eagerly awaiting the next step.

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## Preparing Children

### Help them cope with their feelings.

- ⇒ **Acknowledge children's—and your own—feelings** about the change.
- ⇒ **Plan familiar activities** that help children release tension.
- ⇒ **Encourage movement, dancing, and physical play** to help children de-stress.
- ⇒ **Use books** to open discussions about the move and how children feel about it.
- ⇒ Encourage children to **act out their feelings during dramatic play**.

### Reflect on the fun you've had in your classroom.

- ⇒ **Encourage children to recount their favorite memories**, and use those positive experiences to create excitement about the new classroom.
- ⇒ **Look through photos** taken during the year. Let children keep copies of their favorites.

### Get to know the new classroom or school.

- ⇒ **Discuss the new classroom often** and answer children's questions.
- ⇒ **Visit the new classroom at least once**, more if you can. Have children write or draw about their visit.

## Preparing Families

- ⇒ **Keep families involved throughout the year** so that the transition is gradual for them as well.
- ⇒ **Schedule a special day for families** to come to class to learn, with their children, about the new classroom.
- ⇒ **Invite families to visit the new classroom, school, or program** so that they will feel comfortable with the new environment and new staff.
- ⇒ **Send a meaningful letter home** thanking them for letting you care for their child and suggesting ways they can help their child cope with the change.

### Sources:

Debora Jones, "Letting My Butterflies Go: Helping Children Move on to Kindergarten," *Teaching Young Children*, Vol. 3, No. 4, April-May 2010, pp. 21–22, <[www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/Jones.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/Jones.pdf)>, accessed on April 6, 2012.

Barbara T. Bowman & Paula A. Cottone, "Transition Change With Continuity," Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education, <<http://www.ecechicago.org/teacher/handbooks/Transition.html>>.

### Suggested Children's Books

*Dinosaur Starts School*  
by Pamela Duncan Edwards  
© 2009 Albert Whitman & Co.

*Moony Luna* (English/Spanish)  
by Jorge Argueta  
© 2005 Children's Book Press

### Special Considerations for Dual Language Learners

Transitions can be very trying for dual language learners and their families, especially the transition from pre-K to kindergarten, when the child enters a public school system for the first time. Help families understand all aspects of the transition by presenting information in their home language whenever possible.

Communicating with the new school is also crucial. Find out about the rules and regulations related to class placement and teaching for dual language learners. Keep the new teacher and school staff informed about the child's English skills and his home language. Your observations will be a valuable supplement to test results.