



First day at School – Through the eyes of a mother *An emotional journey*

(Part-1)

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*I wonder what you're doing right now and if everyone is treating you kind.
I hope there is a special person and a nice friend that you can find.
I wonder if the teacher knows, just how special you are to me
and if the brightness of your heart is something she can see.
I wonder if you are thinking about me and if you need a hug.
I already miss the sound of your voice and how you give my leg a tug.
I wonder if you could possibly understand how hard it is for me to let you grow.
On this day know that my heart breaks, for this is the first step in letting my baby go.*



This poem epitomises all there is to understand about the anxiety levels of both the parent and the child, but in no way undermines the pressure on the preschool teacher.

One can only imagine the anguish of a parent when she/he returns to an empty house, usually filled with chuckles and cries, little hugs and shrugs, after having dropped off their bundle of joy to school for the very first time.

What would our thoughts be; we've left you without daddy, mummy, your favourite toy and your favourite book! And then we console ourselves that our little boy is all grown up - he did seem settled and did say a quick "good bye". He didn't look back, even for a moment. After all when we left him, he was happy - ready to explore and have fun. Then why did we have to push back our tears, keep a stoic face even when our hearts seemed to be wrenching, as we turned away, acutely missing the feel of the little hands in ours!

Time doesn't seem to tick away as it did when we were together. There were times when all I had yearned for were an extra 15 minutes of me time, yet now I have so much more time and not a thing to do.

Home doesn't beckon anymore, as there is a feeling that something is missing looms large, suffocating me.

My mind starts playing games with me. Should I have waited a little more before enrolling him at the school? Perhaps I should still be the one watching you jump over the fence or hide behind the tree, instead of sitting with an empty expression, picturing - and hoping - our little baby is having fun at school. Was he able to open the snack box that was packed with so much care and which had all of his favourite things? Did the stopper on the new bottle pop open when he wanted a sip of water?

All of a sudden the realisation that he is growing up, and not there to share this moment with me, hits me hard.

The last 2 years have zipped past. It is time to scoop up those memories and bottle them for posterity, it's time to seize every moment, to hold on a bit longer and tighter to every cuddle - to stay in the moment and enjoy each passing minute with you.

And soon it is time to break away from my thoughts, to collect you from the loving arms of your teacher, to scoop you up in a big cuddle, to look for those signs on your little face that will tell me if you have been happy or sad. I look anxiously at your teacher's face hoping for an update as you run into my arms and the tears finally roll down.

My little baby is all grown up but we still have years and years of memories to create.

This is only the first day at Preschool.

