



# The Mind Hub

By



## Topic: Managing Post-Graduation Anxiety (For Parents Too!)

Graduation season is a time of pride, joy, and celebration—but it's also a time of big feelings for students and their parents. Whether your child is leaving Kindergarten, Primary School, or Secondary School, the transition to a new stage in their academic and personal life can bring up anxiety, uncertainty, and even grief.

These emotions are completely normal and can be an important part of the growing process. This newsletter explores common sources of graduation anxiety and offers practical strategies for parents to support both their children—and themselves—during this meaningful transition.

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### **Understanding Graduation Anxiety**

Graduation anxiety may look different depending on your child's age and personality.

Here are some common concerns:

- For Students:
  - Fear of the unknown: “What if I don’t make friends?” “Will I be able to keep up?”
  - Loss of familiar routines and people: Leaving behind teachers, classmates, and a known environment.
  - Performance pressure: Worrying about expectations in a new school or academic setting.
- For Parents:
  - Letting go: The fear of your child growing more independent or needing you less.
  - Uncertainty about readiness: “Is my child truly prepared for this next step?”

- Grief and nostalgia: Mourning the end of an era—yes, it’s okay to feel sad, even when you're proud!

Acknowledging these feelings, rather than pushing them away, can help you better support both your child and yourself through this transition.

## **Tips: Managing the Transition**

### **Name the Feelings – Together**

Children often take emotional cues from their parents. Model emotional honesty by sharing how you’re feeling (in age-appropriate ways) and invite your child to do the same.

- “I’m feeling a little nervous about what’s ahead, but I’m also really proud of you. How are you feeling about moving to Secondary School?”

### **Create Space for Closure**

Encourage meaningful goodbyes:

- Write thank-you notes to teachers.
- Create a “memory book” or photo collage.
- Revisit favourite school spots or routines one last time.

Closure helps with the emotional transition and can make the new beginning feel less abrupt.

### **Stick with Routines**

Predictability reduces stress. Even as the school year ends, keeping consistent meal, bedtime, and activity routines can provide grounding during uncertain moments.

### **Talk Through What is Coming Next**

Preview the next environment as much as possible:

- Attend school tours or orientation events.
- Look at the new school's website together.
- Practice common new routines (e.g., locker combinations, taking the bus).

Anxiety often decreases when children know what to expect.

### **Avoid Over-Planning**

While it's tempting to "fix" their fears with solutions, sometimes just listening and empathizing is what they need most.

### **Tips: Managing Your Own Graduation Anxiety**

#### **Normalise Your Emotions**

Acknowledging these feelings, rather than pushing them away, can help you better support both your child and yourself through this transition.

#### **Focus on What You Can Control**

You may not control your child's next steps, but you can guide, encourage, and model resilience. Reframe your role as one of coach rather than manager.

#### **Celebrate Progress, Not Perfection**

Rather than worrying about whether your child is "ready," celebrate how far they've come. Progress over the years is more important than being 100% prepared for everything.

#### **Connect with Other Parents**

You're not the only one processing this. Find a friend, parent group, or school event where you can talk to others in the same boat.

## Create a New Routine or Ritual

Sometimes we feel lost when familiar routines end. Start something new — a family dinner once a week, shared journaling, or regular check-ins with your child — to maintain connection and stability.

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### ❖ FAQs

1. *Q. My child is excited to graduate, but I feel emotional. Should I hide it from them?*
  - A. It's okay to share your emotions, as long as you don't put the burden of your sadness on them. Saying something like "I'm so proud of you, and I'm feeling emotional because this moment means a lot to me" keeps the focus on your joy for them.
2. *Q. I worry my child isn't ready for the next step. What can I do?*
  - A. No child is 100% "ready" — transitions are where a lot of growth happens. Instead of focusing on readiness, focus on skills they can build and supports you can offer. You can work together on goal-setting, time management, or communication skills over the summer.
3. *Q. How do I deal with my own feelings of loss or emptiness now that my child is moving on?*
  - A. Give yourself permission to grieve the end of a chapter. Reflect on what you've enjoyed in your parenting role so far, and consider how that can evolve. Use this time to rediscover interests, relationships, or self-care habits you may have set aside.
4. *Q. What if my child seems indifferent or disengaged about graduation?*

- A. Not all kids show excitement the same way. Some are overwhelmed or nervous, and some don't process emotions until after the event. Stay supportive, don't pressure them to perform a certain feeling, and open space for later conversation.
5. *Q. What if my child is scared about the next step but won't talk about it?*
- A. Children (especially tweens and teens) may not always verbalize their worries, but they often show it in behaviour — clinginess, irritability, or withdrawing. Keep the door open by saying things like:
- "You don't have to talk about it now, but I'm always here when you're ready."*
- Then, look for low-pressure moments (car rides, bedtime, during shared activities) to gently check in.
6. *Q. Is it normal to feel like I'm losing part of my identity as a parent?*
- A. Yes — many parents experience a sense of loss or shift in identity during big transitions. Your daily responsibilities may change, but your role as a support, guide, and loving presence continues. Try journaling or talking with others about what this phase means to you and how you want to redefine your parenting going forward.
7. *Q. What are some practical things I can do over the summer to prepare them (and myself) for the next stage?*
- A. Here are a few simple, low-stress ideas: Tour the new school or area (even just driving by); practice independence skills like organizing their space, using a calendar, or packing a bag; let them make small choices (clothes, school supplies, lunches) to build decision-making confidence; talk through possible “what if” scenarios together to build problem-solving skills.
8. *Q. What if graduation is bringing up issues from my own past — like regret or unfulfilled dreams?*

A. This is more common than most people realize. Watching your child graduate can trigger reflection about your own experiences. Use this awareness to connect with your child, not project onto them. Consider journaling or speaking with a counsellor/psychologist to work through what's coming up for you.

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## **Final Thoughts**

Graduation is not just a moment — it's a process of letting go and growing. As your child moves forward, so do you. Be gentle with yourself, celebrate the road behind you, and know that new connections and experiences await both of you.

Remember: This is not the end. It's a new beginning — for them, and for you.

If you have any concerns about your child's stress levels or would like further resources, don't hesitate to reach out to the school psychologist.

- The Mind Hub, by Marina Stavrou

