

## **A mother's reflection on her son's first day of pre-kindergarten**

Who knew that a pair of navy shorts and a white polo shirt would have the ability to somehow fast-forward time?

In an instant my soft, snuggly baby somehow transformed into a little boy right before my eyes. Even the sweet little face that has always welcomed my kisses seemed to thin out and lengthen, erasing all traces of that toddler I once knew. And while I tried with all my might to grab on to just a few more seconds of "little", he raced with full-on excitement and uncontained enthusiasm towards "big" as he joined the Pre-K class at Sacred Heart School.

He was so proud of his uniform (it helped A LOT when his sister told him how "cute" he looked this morning) and marched down the hall to his classroom as if he'd been taking that very same walk for years. He greeted his teachers, Mrs. Erwin and Mrs. Sadler, with a sweet hug and, just in case that didn't completely win them over, flashed that signature smile to seal the deal. When Mrs. Sadler told him that she was so excited to see him and had been waiting for a long time to have him in her class, he rubbed her arm and said, "Sorry you were waiting. We had to take some pictures at home first."

He smiled and tolerated his mommy as I flashed picture after picture around his classroom and then settled into a chair at the puzzle table where he made a new friend with a "Hi, my name is Cooper" that rivaled his daddy's sales abilities. Mine wasn't the little guy that they had to peel from his mom's leg; mine was the one that waved confidently and told me he'd see me in car line.

When he got in the car this afternoon, before buckling up, he wiggled onto the console next to me so that he could reach my cheek with those sweet, sweet lips. And, before he began retelling the events of his day so quickly that his little tongue got all tangled up in his mouth, he whispered, "I missed you today" in my ear. And I knew, at that moment, that no uniform or time warp had robbed my little man of his innate sweetness. That the heart of this precious child of mine beats just as kind and loving as it always has. And, as I said "I missed you today too" to the baby boy that smiles back at me from photographs all over our house, I loved the voice of the uniform clad, thin-faced little boy who made new friends, likes his new Velcro shoes, saw his big sister in the hall today, and still thinks it's o.k. to kiss his Mommy in car line."

- Amy Dulion