

# Why have a PreK Graduation?

Graduation is such a special milestone in a child's life.

This ceremony is a great opportunity to [celebrate learning and to recognize an important milestone](#), one that may be the first of many milestones. The innate feeling of pride and accomplishment as you walk across the stage to receive your preschool diploma is so amazing. From the tassel on the graduation cap to hearing the ceremonial music of "Pomp and Circumstance" for the first time, graduation is a special moment.

Many child care centers do not hold a graduation ceremony because it is too much work, the children attend school all year round, or for any number of other reasons. This document is intended to give child care centers an easy to follow guide to host your own special ceremony. By teaching graduation themes throughout the year, children learn the importance of education. If you have never hosted a preschool graduation before, give it a try!

If you have any questions or need further guidance, reach out to us! We are willing to help any child care center host this special night for families. You can email us at [info@drdaycare.com](mailto:info@drdaycare.com) or use the Contact Us form on our website, [www.drdaycare.com](http://www.drdaycare.com).

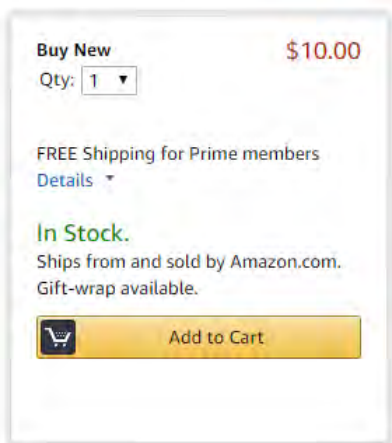
**Continue reading the following pages for tips, tools, and educational activities to reinforce graduation themes.**



# Edgar Graduates

by Dr. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith

Available on amazon: <http://bit.ly/EdgarGraduates>

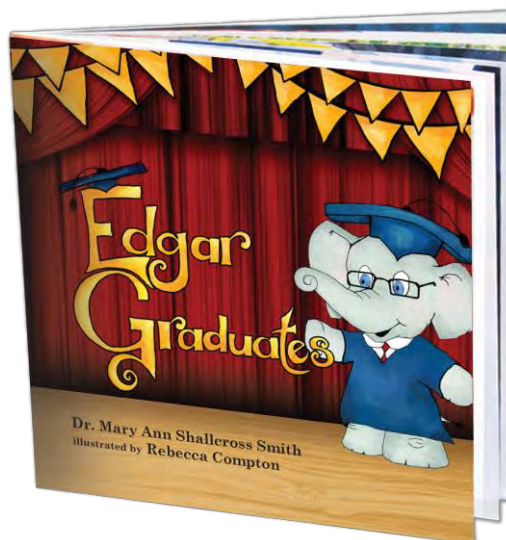


Edgar is preparing for his preschool graduation! He thinks back on when he first started school as an infant. Explore the milestones that Edgar has achieved and discover the possibilities that the future may hold. From diapers to diplomas! Families and children will enjoy reading this story together and discussing educational opportunities that are available. By bringing educational words such as Bachelor's Degree, Doctorate Degree, or diploma into the family conversation, it becomes more attainable for all children. There are so many educational opportunities available!

★★★★★ *"What a great book! My seven year old loves reading it to his baby sister who is just starting out her daycare journey in the infant class. He's been so interested in college and degrees since reading, thanks to Edgar! Very well written and illustrated. Perfect for little ones of all ages."*

★★★★★ *"Edgar Graduates is an adorable AND educational book all in one! I especially loved the key words at the end of the book for the children to find in the story, what a great way to spark conversation with your little one! Excellent read, excellent illustration! Great book!"*

★★★★★ *"This is a wonderful book to help children understand educational milestones in life. I love the bright illustrations and use of children's art work! I look forward to other adventures with Edgar."*



# Tools for a successful PreK Graduation

The tools below are samples of Dr. Day Care materials. These materials can be printed professionally or at your center. This is a great opportunity to brand your center- be sure to include your center logo/name.

## Save the Date

- Post a flyer or sign that alerts parents and families to “save the date” for this graduation.



## Programs

- Create a program for the night of the ceremony:



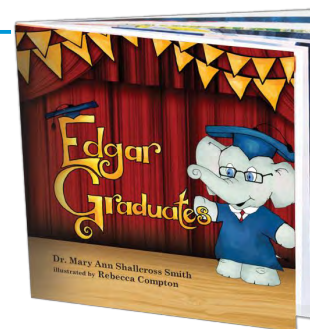
## Diplomas

- Create a diploma for each child. Roll it up for the ceremony (write the child's name in pencil on one of the outside of the diploma for easy access).



## Edgar Graduates

- This book teaches children the concepts of graduation as well as understanding important milestones in a child's life. By reinforcing milestones children can easily recognize (such as toilet training, learning ABCs, and more), children learn about educational opportunities that are available.



## Graduation Checklist

- Use the checklist on the following pages to guide you through planning a PreK Graduation.



# Checklist for a successful PreK Graduation

At Dr. Day Care, we hold our graduations in June, from 6:30PM – 8:30PM. Plan for the actual graduation ceremony to be approximately 30 minutes long with a pot luck celebration after the ceremony. Use the timeline/checklist below to help you plan for a great event.

## 8-12 months prior to your graduation date

- Decide on a graduation date and location (try to find an indoor site in case of poor weather). Suggestion: try to [partner with your local elementary school](#) (great community building).
- Post the graduation date on website, parent board, social media, newsletter, etc.

## 3 months prior to your graduation date

- Check with graduates' parents to ensure that all children graduating will be going to Kindergarten in September. Only children going to Kindergarten should participate in the graduation ceremony.
- Consider hiring a local photographer for graduation day.
- Begin to create a slide show for graduation ceremony - ask parents for photos of children when they were babies. Make sure every child is represented equally, but try to keep it under 10 minutes long.

## 2 months prior to your graduation date

- Order graduation caps, gowns and tassels. Suggestion: order paper/disposable caps & tassels children can take home. Gowns are optional.
- Post a "Save the Date" notice for families monthly in advance regarding the graduation date and time – only graduating families.
- Ensure that there will be enough seating (minimally 4 people per graduate).
- Start preparing music. Select 4-6 songs and fingerplays. These songs and fingerplays should be ones that the children are familiar with and will demonstrate what they have learned throughout the entire school year. Try to incorporate a "Graduation/Going to Kindergarten song." The children and staff must know the songs! Child-led songs work best, without having to rely on music playing in the background.
- Incorporate the Pledge of Allegiance into the ceremony- start practicing now.
- Teach concepts of graduation – cap, diploma, tassel, ceremony, audience, etc.

## 1 month prior to your graduation date

- Create individual student profiles to say about each child.
- Begin practicing songs and ceremony at least 1 day a week with the children.
- Children begin work on making props for songs/fingerplays as appropriate to graduation songs and poetry.
- Practice walking on and off the stage with the children. Pick songs that signal the start and end, such as walking in to "Pomp and Circumstance" and leaving to "It's a Small World."
- Purchase a gift for graduates. Suggested: [Edgar Graduates](#) a book by Mary Ann Shallcross Smith and Rebecca Compton (available on Amazon.com). Write center name, date, & child's name inside each book.
- Complete progress reports and/or compile student profiles and distribute to parents after graduation. Have these out on display at graduation, possibly with a framed photo of children in graduation caps.
- Finalize slide show – preview and proof it before graduation/make sure the slide show works!
- Create a graduation program. Include children's full names (in alphabetical order). Check (& double check!) that all children are included, no doubles, no misspellings, no non-graduates included, etc. Director and teachers' names should be included in the graduation program. Include all songs and fingerplays that are in the ceremony. [Proofread the program!](#) Ask multiple people to proofread the program before final printing.



### 3 weeks prior to your graduation date

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- 🎓 Call to confirm place and time for graduation.
- 🎓 Finalize props to coordinate with graduation songs and fingerplays.
- 🎓 Send home written invitations.
- 🎓 Purchase token gift for teachers. For example, a rose, hand sanitizer, lotion, etc.

### 2 weeks prior to your graduation date

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- 🎓 Confirm place for graduation - again!
- 🎓 Prepare food for after the ceremony. If holding a Pot Luck, post a signup sheet for parents – ask to bring disposable containers if possible. Have extra cups, plates, napkins, etc. available.
- 🎓 Rehearse daily (in the space you will be in, if possible). Rehearse until you feel the children and staff are comfortable (songs, hand shake, right hand over heart for Pledge of Allegiance, etc.).
- 🎓 Plan for where children will sit- they do not need to sit alphabetically, seat according to where they will do the best.
- 🎓 Make sure there are enough programs for the adults expected – make sure you have more than necessary. Include center's name and information on the program (to market your center).
- 🎓 Submit a press release and/or post on social media
- 🎓 **Directors or teachers should write something to say about each child during the ceremony** – try to alternate people speaking so it is not the same person the whole time.
- 🎓 Devise a “red carpet” of some sort so parents know where children are walking in.
- 🎓 Plan who is going to take photos the night of graduation.
- 🎓 Prepare who will pass out diplomas. Roll diplomas and tie with ribbons. Pencil graduate's name on outside of diploma for easy access.
- 🎓 Hang a banner with center name on it (be sure that it is visible behind children, for photographs).

### Day of Graduation

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- 🎓 **Confirm graduation place once again.**
- 🎓 Delegate roles to all staff– food, handing out programs, photos, crowd control, cleanup, etc.
- 🎓 Check that microphone/sound system works, along with projector and slide show (as applicable).
- 🎓 Have a designated place (out of sight of guests) for graduates to wait until they line up to march into the ceremony when it begins.
- 🎓 Make sure teachers are not blocking view of graduates. A teacher should sit low in front of children to lead songs, not stand. Teachers and guests on stage must also sit. Let children walk to front of stage to receive diplomas unless they really need assistance.
- 🎓 Give parents a “five-minute warning” before graduation begins so they can greet graduates.

### During the ceremony

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- 🎓 Welcome the parents and guests, begin following the graduation program.
- 🎓 Let parents and guests know what will happen next – announce items in the program before it begins.
- 🎓 Allow time for each child to have his/her photo taken with person handing out the diplomas. This is a good time to talk specifically about each child. Don't rush to next child's name before that child has sat down – gives parents a chance to take a photo.
- 🎓 Thank staff and give token gift to each team member in attendance, before children leave stage.
- 🎓 Give children their gift as they exit the stage.

### After the ceremony

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- 🎓 Enjoy the potluck meal with parents, children, and guests.
- 🎓 Play the slideshow (repeat it if possible).
- 🎓 Post photos on social media, website, etc.
- 🎓 Meet with teachers and parents to discuss what worked and how to improve. **Begin planning next year's graduation!**
- 🎓 Preschool students who are staying for the summer begin school as “**preschool graduates**” the day after graduation – no more naps and increased kindergarten readiness activities.



# Resources to teach graduation topics

Begin focusing on graduation themes in March/April. Reinforce and practice as your graduation dates gets closer. Set up extra graduation props in your learning centers:

## Circle Time

- 🎓 Read *Edgar Graduates* as a group
- 🎓 Graph milestones that children have/have not done yet:
  - Crawling
  - Walking
  - Running
  - Skipping
  - Napping
  - Writing letters
  - Writing name
  - Knows ABCs
  - Started school as an Infant
  - Started school as a Toddler
  - Started school in Preschool

## Dramatic Play Center

- 🎓 Set up a graduation stage or area to practice
- 🎓 Themed items to include:
  - Graduation gowns
  - Graduation caps
  - Tassels
  - Diplomas
  - Programs
  - Finger play/song props
  - Chairs for the audience and for the children on stage
  - Microphone/pretend microphone

## Art Center

- 🎓 Make yarn or sting tassels to use as a paint brush alternative

## Language Arts Center

- 🎓 Add “tassel,” “diploma,” “gown,” “cap,” “graduation” to word wall

## Writing Center

- 🎓 Provide sample diplomas for children to practice writing their names

## Sensory Table

- 🎓 Small rolled up diplomas and colored rice for “glitter”

## Music & Movement

- 🎓 Play “Pomp and Circumstance” so children can practice marching on/off stage

## Block Center

- 🎓 Cut out graduation photos and paste/tape onto blocks for block play.

## Discussion topics

- 🎓 What do you want to do when you finish school?
- 🎓 When you were a baby, what things did you do?

## Graduation activity

- 🎓 Create a preschool yearbook together. Children love reading about themselves in a book, so include information gained from the discussion topics, graphed information from circle time, drawings of themselves, and of course photographs!



# Graduation Songs to sing together

## Going off to Kindergarten

*Sung to: "Oscar Mayer Wiener Song"*

Oh, I'm ready to go off to kindergarten  
That is where I really want to be  
Cause when I get to go to kindergarten  
Everyone will be so proud of me!

## I'm a Little Graduate

*Sung To: "I'm a Little Teapot"*

I'm a little graduate  
Dressed in \_\_\_\_ (color),  
Wearing a gown  
and a cap on my head.  
When I leave preschool  
I will be \_\_\_\_ (age)  
A kindergarten student  
Aren't you proud of me?

## Fun in Preschool

*Sung to: "I'll Be Working on the Railroad"*

I've been having fun in preschool,  
Learning all year long.  
I can tell you all about it,  
Just listen to this song.  
We've been learning shapes and colors,  
Letters and numbers too!  
I've learned how to share with others,  
Now our year is through!

## Graduation

*Original Author Unknown*

*Sung to: "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"*

Kindergarten here we come  
We know we'll have lots of fun  
Lots of things to make and do  
Reading, writing, counting too  
Kindergarten here we come  
We know we'll have lots of fun

## Special Me

*Sung To: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"*

Special, special, special me  
How I wonder what I'll be.  
In this big world I can be  
Anything I want to be.  
Special, special, special me  
How I wonder what I'll be.

## To Kindergarten We Go

*by Christa Koch*

*Sung to: "Mary Had a Little Lamb"*

In Preschool we had lots of fun,  
Lots of fun, lots of fun.  
In Preschool we had lots of fun.  
To Kindergarten we go.  
We know our letters and 123s  
How to share, and all about me.  
In Pre-k we had lots of fun.  
To Kindergarten we go.





**Edgar  
Graduates**

Dr. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith  
illustrated by Rebecca Compton