

When the bell rings we have to go inside:
Preschool children's views on the elementary school.

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The paper describes the results of a research study on preschool children's views of the transition to elementary school. The purpose of the study was to investigate preschool children's views and attitudes concerning their transition into elementary school and explore how they experience the difference between preschool and elementary school. Forty-eight 5 and 6 year old children were interviewed at the end of their preschool stay. The children were interviewed in groups of three. The interview questions were semi-structured. The children were asked what children were learning and doing in the preschool and what they thought children were learning and doing in the elementary school. They were also asked if there was anything that they would miss from the preschool and if there was anything that they did not like in the preschool. Finally, they were asked if they were anxious about anything in the elementary school, if they looked forward to anything in particular and how they thought the elementary school was different from the preschool. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed afterwards. Data was analysed using strategies of qualitative inquiry outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Graue and Walsh (1998). The computer software NuddistVivo was used. The results show that these preschool children had definite ideas about the elementary school and what children learn there. When they talked about the elementary school, the children most frequently mentioned things that were different from the preschool and the structure and the size of the elementary school. Their ideas about the elementary school came from scheduled visits to the elementary school as well as from older siblings and friends.