

**From:** Amy Ettinger amy.ettinger@parenthood.com  
**Subject:** Re: Wordpress  
**Date:** June 2, 2014 at 6:33 PM  
**To:** Sara Ward sara.a.ward@gmail.com

AE

Hi Sara,  
I just wanted to let you know that your post is live on our site.  
<http://bayarearent.com/blog/the-beginning-of-the-end/>

I've shared it with our social media audience as well!  
Thanks for doing it, and I really hope you'll write more for us soon.  
best,  
Amy

BAP blog  
Sara Ward

HED: The Beginning of the End

By Sara Ward

Look at you. LOOK AT YOU! Shoulders slumped, bags under your eyes. Your hair is loosely pulled back in a ponytail – not because you're so chic as to pull it back loosely, but because you've had it in a ponytail for three days and the elastic is finally giving way. You're a mess. An absolute mess. And I'm not judging, no. I am simply calling it as I see it, because I see it EVERYWHERE. There may even be hints of it in my own mirror. Maybe.

What we have here is a physical indication of the exhaustion and that vibrating current of insanity that so noticeably hits each year at this time. Can you feel it? No more homework, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks! 'Tis the close of yet another school year, folks, and with it, the hurry-scurry of a million things yet undone, projects that must be completed, graduations, promotions, proms, plays and the end-of-year purgatory in which you wait, wait, wait for the real fun to begin!

Why, in just the last week alone, we have had our school's open house – for which the year's art had to be hung and arranged gallery-style. There was a bake sale. We had a field trip to the zoo, which ought to be amazing, right? But let's be honest. Watching primates as they swing from branch to branch beyond a barrier is great. Chasing the five "monkeys" you agreed to chaperone is not nearly as pleasant.

And have you ever TRIED to get a monkey to do even a page of homework? My guess is that you'd have better luck with that than you will have getting Junior to commit to the final month of schoolwork. Even a law-abiding, education-loving parent will agree that homework in the final weeks of school is proof positive that teachers have a sadistic side. My son's teacher gave a sing-song whoop of glory to the final homework assignment of the year. We, too, joined her with a last-minute rally and a spark of enthusiasm the likes of which had never been seen. So imagine our surprise when we looked upon the list o' learnin' and saw that it was quite nearly TRIPLE the work of weeks' past! Sadistic, indeed.

But as we close another year – staying up late to glue, bake, plan and email – try to quell the urge to focus only on what is yet to be accomplished. Let us look back at another year past. A year of growth and of new experiences. In our family, we look back at a year that included many firsts. The first lost tooth. The first word read. The first time our preschooler wrote his name all by himself. We look back at the first lost recess because a certain first-grader thought it would be hilarious to barricade the boys' toilets. These are the memories that will become the stories our children tell when they recount their youth to our grandchildren.

Finally, look forward. To the beauty of even a small slice of slow motion that summer affords everyone. To the flavors of the season, the freedom, the glorious exhaustion that can only be had with the blessed combination of sun, water and laughter. Look forward to the reassurance that as late July rolls into the early August humdrums, the first day of school is coming fast, and these sweet people that we are privileged to be with during each passing season are growing faster than you think. Savor it.

And for the love of God, fix that ponytail!