

Arriving Home

“Lucy, we are getting closer to home!”

Sequence the next steps for the child by saying them aloud:

1. When we get to the building door, Lucy will stay beside Mommy and the stroller.
2. Lucy and Mommy will go on the elevator.

[arrive at condo door; still outside] “Now we will go inside together” [see Note 1]

Sequence the next steps for the child by saying them aloud:

3. Mommy and Lucy will go inside together.
4. Lucy will sit on the mat to take off outside clothes.
5. Mommy will take off Lucy’s outside clothes.
6. Then Lucy will go to the bathroom to wash hands with Mommy
7. Mommy will help Lucy even if she is crying. Mommy will kiss Lucy’s owies after washing hands [see Note 2].

Praise compliance with each step:

- “Thank you for sitting on the mat!”
- “Thank you for helping take off mitts”
- “Thank you for walking to the bathroom”

Use distraction and motivating statements and questions to gain compliance:

- “Who’s going to sing the ABCs?”
- “We’ve finished washing hands, let’s go say hi to Sister!”

Note 1: This transition was difficult because the child wanted to play in the bushes outside the condo building instead of going inside. The transition script was written as a mirror to the “Arriving at a Destination” script to keep all routines as similar as possible, increasing the likelihood of compliance. In this case, the “procrastination pursuit [see blog]” is playing in the bushes and I would schedule up to 30 minutes of play in the bushes as frequently as possible to gain compliance for those times when you really need to get inside quickly. In addition, at this time of year, Christmas lights on the bushes meant the child was not allowed to play in those particular bushes, so I would find another bush for play during this time while setting the limit on the decorated bush.

Note 2: This statement was specific to the child for whom I wrote this script. She used the complaint “I have an owie. Kiss my owie!” to stop the routine during transition periods. Behaviour modification strategies like ignore/praise suggest that you ignore these complaints so as not to encourage them and eventually the child will stop making the complaint. However, I have found that acknowledging the complaint as legitimate but putting limits on when and how Mommy will respond to be less severe and a more pleasant experience for parent and child. The assumption that the owie is fake/a procrastination method is still just an adult assumption. Your child may very well have an actual owie. So, I feel that it is better to acknowledge that what they say is true (to them), but that Mommy can still set the limits as to how she will address the issue. I think that this method fosters a more trusting relationship where it is no longer Mommy’s responsibility to figure out if the child is lying about an owie. Mommy does not need to engage in that power struggle.