

Going Outside

“Lucy, we are getting ready to go outside now. It’s time to say goodbye to our toys.”

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

1. First, we will clean up together with our clean-up song.
2. Then, we will go to the front door.
3. Mommy will put on her clothes first. Lucy will sit with her buddy on the mat.
4. Then, Mommy will help put Lucy’s outside clothes on even if Lucy is crying.
5. If Lucy has an owie, Mommy will kiss it when we are outside [see Note 1].

“Bye-bye Toys!”

[Play/sing clean up song and clean up.]

Restate each step prior to each step being completed. Use praise and distracting statements to gain compliance:

- “Ok, now we are going to the front door – let’s get your Buddy to hold.”
- “I’m putting on my clothes. Thank you for sitting on the mat patiently.”
- “I’m putting on your clothes. I’m excited for our adventure today [distracting statement]. Thank you for being pleasant as we put on clothes. [praise]”

[OR, when you trigger a tantrum]

“I can see you are upset. Mommy is going to put your clothes on now even while you cry. I’m sorry you are feeling sad and mad. I will kiss your owie when we are outside.”

Note 1: 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.