

Leaving Destination

“Lucy, we are getting ready to go home/outside now. It’s time for you to have some play time on the stairs.” [see Note 1]

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

1. First, I will play our stair song while you play.
2. When the song is over, Lucy will sit with her Buddy on the bottom stair.
3. Mommy will put our outside clothes on.

[Play stair song.]

“Ok, the stair song is over. Let’s find your Buddy to snuggle while you sit on the bottom stair.”

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

4. Mommy will put on her outside clothes first.
5. Then, Mommy/Auntie A will help put Lucy’s outside clothes on even if Lucy is crying.
6. If Lucy has an owie, Mommy will kiss it when we are outside [see Note 2].

Restate each step while you are completing the step and use praise and distracting statements to gain compliance:

- “I’m putting on my clothes. I wonder if we’ll see any worms in the rain today? Thank you for sitting on the stairs patiently.”
- “I’m putting on your clothes. Thank you for being pleasant as we put on clothes.”

[OR, when you trigger a tantrum]

“I can see you are upset. I’m 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 was specific to the child for whom I wrote the script. The child typically procrastinated the routine by climbing up and down the stairs (near the door) and would start crying and having a tantrum at any attempts to stop her from using the stairs. Think about your routines and if there is something your child wants to do that typically slows down your transitions and build it right into the routine!

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.