

## Transition to Nap Time

“Lucy, it is almost time for nap! We will listen to our nap song while you finish playing.”

[play or sing song]

After the song ends, say the sequence steps out loud for the child:

1. Now we will go to the bathroom to change diaper and put on pajamas
2. Then, Lucy will choose a book.
3. Then, Lucy will say goodnight to Sister.
4. Then, we will go into the bedroom to read.

Stay with the child as they complete the steps and say each step again proceeding the step, if necessary.

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

5. We are finished the book, so Mommy\* will turn out the light and Lucy will walk to her room. Mommy will help Lucy to her room even if she is crying [see note 1].
6. In the bedroom, Mommy will turn on the rain.
7. Then, Lucy will shut the door and lie down with Lovey.
8. [add further nap steps, as per your routine].

If the routine is many steps, break up the sequence of steps into 3 or 4 steps. Say the steps, do the steps then pause and sequence the next steps. Once the routine is firmly in place, you may be able to skip the verbal sequencing or reduce the details of the sequencing by saying a summary step at the start, such as, “Mommy and Lucy will go to the bedroom for our nap time routine”

9. [more sequenced nap steps]
10. I will kiss all your owies after nap [see note 2]

Note 1: This was specific to the child for whom I wrote the script. This is the point in the routine that she most typically started crying and resisting the process, which would often turn into a tantrum. Mom would spend up to 60 minutes waiting for the tantrum to end without getting any further in the routine while sometimes also trying to solve the child’s crying. My idea here is that the child is allowed to cry and release her emotional backpack but Mom can still move through more steps of the routine (knowing that as time progressed the child will be getting more and more tired and less able to comply with any routine, anyway); Mom doesn’t need to solve the crying. Once the child experiences the routine happening consistently (even with crying), they know that Mommy knows what she’s doing and she’s in charge of the situation. Mom is kind, soothing and empathetic during the crying, but the routine continues.

Note 2: This step 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.

\* I use the name “Mommy” for simplicity in the scripts, but please use whatever caregiver’s name is appropriate for your family. I wrote these scripts specifically for a Mommy and her daughter.