

Scripted stories are a great tool to support a child who has difficulty in a routine or activity.

Scripted stories can help a child understand what to expect during the activity or routine, understand the expectations and perspectives of others, and provide instructions about what to do.

Creating a Story

Step 1. Think of a situation or routine that is difficult for a child or multiple children in your classroom

- ▶ Write out what you want the child to do. Describe what you want to happen in the activity.

For example: *During clean-up, children put their toys away.*

- ▶ List some ways that it might not go so well.

For example: *When I say, "It's time to clean up for lunch," the child cries and does not want to put toys away.*

Step 2. Add details to make complete sentences

- ▶ Describe the situation or activity, who is involved, and what they are doing.
- ▶ Write from the child's point of view using short and simple sentences. Think about what the child might be feeling or thinking in the situation.
- ▶ Focus on what you would like the child to do instead of the challenging behavior.
- ▶ Write about the child managing frustrations or challenges successfully. Write these sentences using first person (e.g., I can...).
- ▶ Put major steps or each major idea on a separate page.

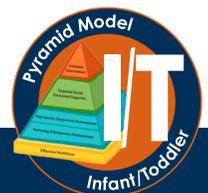
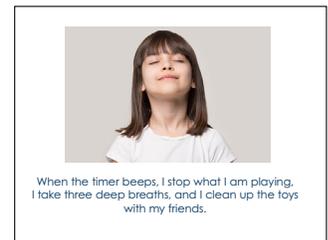
For example: *Sometimes cleaning up is hard because I want to keep playing. My teacher sets a timer so I will know when center time is almost done. When I see the timer, I finish playing and get ready to clean up. When the timer beeps, I stop what I am playing, I take three deep breaths, and I clean up the toys with my friends.*

- ▶ End the story by noting the positive outcomes that result when the activity is completed.

For example: *I am a big helper when I clean up toys at school! My teacher is proud of me when I am a big helper and clean up.*

Step 3. Add pictures on each page

- ▶ Always try to use real photographs of the child and their peers, with caregiver permission.
- ▶ If needed, you can use images or photos you find on the web or in a magazine.
- ▶ Print or assemble the story to use with the child.



Using the Scripted Story

Congratulations on putting together a scripted story to help a child understand what to expect during routines, activities, and new situations! Now you can put your scripted story to use.

Read the story with the child

- ▶ Talk about the important parts of the story.
- ▶ Encourage the child to ask questions.
- ▶ Read the story multiple times a day.

Ask questions about important parts

For example: *“What can you do when the timer goes off?”*

- ▶ If the child knows the answer, let them know how great that is: *“Yes, that’s right, you can take three deep breaths and clean up. You remembered from your story!”*
- ▶ If the child doesn’t know or gives an incorrect answer, go back to the story: *“Let’s look at that page again, here it says, ‘When the timer beeps, I stop what I am playing, I take three deep breaths, and I clean up the toys with my friends’ So, what can you do when the timer goes off?”*



Celebrate the child’s effort and success

- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback when the child uses the skills from the story.
For example: *“You took deep breaths and cleaned up when the timer went off, just like the story. Thanks for being a clean-up helper!”*
- ▶ Encourage the child to use the skills when needed.
For example: *“We can play with the blocks, but be ready for the timer soon because it is almost time for lunch.”*