

WORST-CASE SCENARIO.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHILD GET DRESSED



Offer a controlled choice.

Give your child two items to choose between so she will feel as though she is asserting herself. Ask, “This shirt or this shirt?” followed by “These pants or these pants?” Do not offer too many alternatives, and agree with whatever choice is made.



Wrap your child’s clothes like a present.

Place your child’s outfit in a box. Wrap the box in gaudy paper festooned with ribbons. Place the “present” at the foot of the child’s bed so she gets up enthusiastically and finds her clothes all ready. The child may experience acute disappointment, however, when she discovers that she has not received a real present.



Play make-believe.

- Pretend your child is the local fire chief and must get dressed as quickly as possible to get to a fire.
- Pretend that your child has been selected to model clothes at a fashion show. Once dressed, she can parade back and forth on the “catwalk.” Take a few photographs.



Race.

Race to complete dressing before your child. Allow her to win. Since she now understands the concept of

speed-dressing, each day encourage her to race against her own times.



Distract.

Keep the child distracted by tickling, administering raspberries, or singing songs. Ask her to imitate animal sounds or recite the alphabet.



Warm the clothes.

In a dryer or on a radiator, warm the clothes you select and encourage your child to get dressed fast, while the clothes are still toasty warm.



Allow your child to wear pajamas to school.

Your child will quickly get the message that day clothes are preferable once she faces the stares of her peers.

Be Aware

- You're not done until the shoes are on, too. Make putting on shoes part of getting dressed or you will face a whole new struggle later.
- Offering a bribe—cash, extra television time, getting carried into the kitchen, dessert for breakfast—is inappropriate and sets a bad precedent. It can be extremely effective as a last resort, however (see “How to Bribe Your Child” on page 102).

**WORST-CASE
SCENARIO.**