

PDA Morning Routine Reset

Simple shifts to reduce pressure and start the day with less conflict

Why mornings trigger PDA

- Demand stacking + time pressure
- Freeze can look like refusal
- More prompting = more anxiety

Parent nervous system first

- Pause before speaking
- Soft voice + slower pace
- Lead calm, not urgency

Reduce decision fatigue

- Prep clothes, bag, and shoes the night before
- Keep mornings predictable
- Remove unnecessary choices

What to say instead

Instead of: "Hurry up, we're late."

Try: "We'll get there. Let's just start with one step."

Instead of: "Why aren't you ready yet?"

Try: "I see it's hard to get started this morning."

Instead of: "Put your shoes on now."

Try: "Want help starting or want to do it yourself?"

Instead of: "You're going to miss the bus."

Try: "Let's just focus on the next step."

Micro-steps help the brain start

- Sit up
- Put feet on floor
- Pick up clothes
- One step at a time

Use external cues (not nagging)

- Playlist, timer, or Alexa cue
- Same cue daily builds predictability
- Let the cue do the talking

If they're stuck

- Start alongside them
- Keep language minimal
- Support, don't push

Mornings feel hard because of pressure, not defiance. Reduce demand, support the nervous system, and start small. - Tara Trievel