



De-Escalation Scripts for PDA Parents

What to say in the hardest moments

Having language ready before a crisis reduces your cognitive load when it matters most. These scripts are for common high-conflict situations with PDA teenagers. Adapt them to your child's specific language and your family's communication style.

Morning Escalation

Instead of: "Get up! You'll be late!" Try

- "School starts in 45 minutes — you've got time."
- "Whenever you're ready to get up, I've put breakfast out."
- "Is there anything I can do to make this morning easier?"
- "I'm not going to pressure you — let me know if there's a problem."

Screen Time Conflict

Instead of: "Turn it off NOW." Try

- "I'm thinking about dinner in about 20 minutes — you okay to wrap up then?"
- "I know you're in the middle of something — is there a good stopping point coming?"
- "I'm not asking you to stop — just flagging the time."

Hygiene Resistance

Instead of: "You need to shower, you smell." Try

- "Would tonight or tomorrow morning work better for a shower?"
- "I'm not going to fight about this — just wanted to mention it."
- "I got some different deodorant options — want to try them or leave it?"

Homework Avoidance



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Instead of: "You HAVE to do your homework." Try

- "Is homework going to get done tonight or is that not happening?"
- "I'm happy to help or just be nearby — what would work?"
- "Do you want to email the teacher and let them know?"

When They're Already Escalating

Drop everything and use only

- "I'm not fighting. I'm just here."
- "I'm going to give you some space."
- "Nothing has to happen right now."
- "I love you. This is hard."

Repair After a Difficult Interaction

- "That was hard. I'm sorry I got frustrated."
- "I'm not angry. I was worried."
- "I don't want things to be like this between us."
- "I'm here when you're ready."

The principle behind the scripts Every script above shares a common thread: it removes the demand while maintaining connection. The goal is not compliance — it is keeping the relationship intact so that future cooperation is possible.