

NFSD Feb 2013 issue

Toy Guys & the Miniature Motorcycle

Dedicated to parents of preschoolers - a true story by Radha Selvester, CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services Inc.

I suppose it was my fault for not leaving enough time to get ready, but logically it shouldn't take all that long to get out the door. You just stop what you're doing, put on a jacket, and leave, right? HA! Try explaining that to a preschooler! I told him we were late, that time is too precious to waste, and that he had to stop playing around and concentrate on getting ready to leave. I might as well have been speaking in Swahili as playing is the purpose of a three year old's life!

It started when I looked at my watch and realized it was 4:25. I had to be somewhere at 4:30. Never mind why or where but I knew that I would definitely not be anywhere within the next five minutes as it was just not enough time to take all the necessary steps to get ready to go.

Those without children have no idea what it takes to prepare a miniature human for the transition of leaving the house. As parents, I'm guessing you will relate.

First of all, I had to try to find my son. I think he was on another planet playing with his little toy guys and a miniature motorcycle. Non-stop chatter as he speaks on behalf of his action figures. "Brrrrm! Brrrrm!" as he speaks on behalf of the motorcycle. I can't seem to get through!

Then I notice that he isn't wearing any clothes. He's just gone to the bathroom. Last time I checked there were just one or two orifices one might need to liberate to use the bathroom. Why all of one's garments should need to be removed simply for toileting is beyond me. I do, however, count my blessings that he is at least past potty training and out of diapers.

I assemble all the necessary wearing apparel for Florida's unpredictable winter climate and we begin the game of "dressing a moving object." My son can dress himself when he wants to, but since he is not wearing the watch I decide it is best for me to do it for him. Besides, the chances of him getting the right limb in the right hole four times in a row are just slightly greater than my winning the lottery (and I don't play the lottery).

I manage to get the upper body clothed in spite of the fact that his fists are tightly clenched around his toy motorcycle and little men. Underpants go on fairly smoothly as well. But putting on his pants is another story all together. He can't seem to get his legs all the way through so that he doesn't trip himself by stepping on the cuffs. I try giving him some advice but he can't hear me due to his location in another galaxy. He also has not stopped talking long enough to receive any transmissions from earth planet. And besides, I suspect he is mother-deaf, though I have yet to confirm this from medical authority.

Finally, he is dressed. I won't describe the struggle of choosing an appropriate jacket. I won't tell you how all of a sudden he has landed on earth and realized I'm about to zip up his jacket when HE wants to

work the zipper. Then he has to decide which toy guys to bring along in the car. For some reason he just hadn't realized we were going somewhere until just now. There is the barrage of questions: "Where are we going?" "Why?" "What are we going to do there?" "Why?"

"Why? Why? Why?!" These are followed by the protests: "I don't want to go!" "I'm hungry" "I'm staying here and watching a video!"

It's 4:35 as I start up the car. Not bad I think, we're only a few minutes late. Of course something could go wrong between now and our destination, but I'm confident I can cope with anything so long as it is not a three year old: car trouble, blizzards, and tornados, even nuclear war, would seem almost insignificant compared with readying a preschooler for an outing.

Epilogue: I wrote this story 19 years ago. My son is now 22. To the parents of preschool children all I can say is enjoy what you have when you have it. Will it get better? Maybe. Will it get worse before it gets better? Probably. All that is guaranteed is that it will get - different! Parenting is a roller coaster ride that you don't get off and next thing you know you're a grandparent. You will probably not be appreciated for this most important job you'll ever have until you're gone. 😊

If you have children who need help on their lives' roller coaster ride, please contact CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services. CDS offers FREE COUNSELING for children age 6-17 with a variety of behavior or attitude issues. (352) 244-0628 www.cdsfl.org