Learning New Behavior Can Be Fun

“BEING SECOND, THIRD,…OR EVEN LAST!”
Catherine Faherty, www.catherinefaherty.com

SKILL TO LEARN:
How to be second, third, fourth, or even last, and feel okay - no matter what position in sequence you are.

NEW UNDERSTANDING:
It’s okay to be second, third, fourth, any position, even last. I don’t always have to be first. Other people can be first. Being first doesn’t mean “right” or “the best”. Being other-than-first doesn’t mean “wrong.” It’s okay to be in any position. Being in a particular position in sequence, can change from day to day, time to time, situation to situation.

EXAMPLE SITUATION:
The child may be in a routine of having to be the first one down the stairs, the first one to buckle her seat belt, the first one in line, etc.

MAKE A GAME OF IT:
Help make it easier to develop a new routine of sometimes being first, sometimes second, sometimes third… initially, in the form of a game. Each day it would be decided ahead of time “which position” she would be coming down the stairs (or in another specific situation at home or at school.) For example, to make it more structured and easier to handle, assign the ordinal number for the situation for her to see in the morning, by writing it on the calendar: 1st, 2nd, 3rd… She would have to count the other family members going down the stairs. Make sure everyone cooperates by being aware of this new strategy.

A variation of this would be to put numbered cards (1, 2, 3, 4,… ) equal to the number of people in the family or group, in a container. Before going downstairs for breakfast, each person draw a card from the container, and go downstairs in that sequence.

Remember that the intent of this game is to give your child practice in being a position other-than-first, changing day to day, practicing it in a way that will become fun, rather than anxiety-provoking.
***REMEMBER: Write Social Stories about being first, order or doing things, line order in school, etc. Social Stories may expand your child’s understanding of the bigger picture. Teachers and parents are encouraged to be trained in writing Social Stories. Authorized training in Social Stories is provided by Catherine Faherty. www.catherinefaherty.com