



When I'm Upset About Changes

Samantha Kessler



Leo loves his daily routine, especially building tall block towers right after breakfast. Today, his mom tells him they have to leave early for an appointment, and Leo feels a sudden wave of frustration building up inside.



His heart beats a little faster, and his hands clench into tight fists as he looks at his unfinished tower. It feels like a big, stormy cloud is gathering in his chest because things aren't going the way he expected.



Instead of shouting or throwing the blocks, Leo remembers to take a deep breath, breathing in slowly through his nose and out through his mouth. He tells his mom in a calm voice that he feels upset about leaving his game.



His mom kneels down to his level, offering a warm hug and validating his feelings. She explains that it is completely okay to feel upset when plans change unexpectedly.



Together, they look at a visual schedule on the refrigerator to see what will happen next. Seeing the plan written out helps the stormy cloud in Leo's chest start to drift away.



To make the transition easier, Leo chooses a special small toy to bring along in the car. Having a familiar comfort object makes the upcoming change feel much safer and more manageable.



During the car ride, Leo focuses on a fun spotting game, looking for red cars out the window. Shifting his attention helps his mind calm down and brings a smile back to his face.



When they arrive at the appointment, Leo uses his words to express his needs to the kind receptionist. He feels proud of himself for handling the new environment so bravely.



Once they return home, Leo gets to go right back to his blocks and finishes building his magnificent tower. He realizes that a change in schedule doesn't mean his fun is gone forever.



Curled up with his family later that evening, Leo feels calm, happy, and proud. He knows that the next time he feels upset about a change, he has the tools to find his calm again.