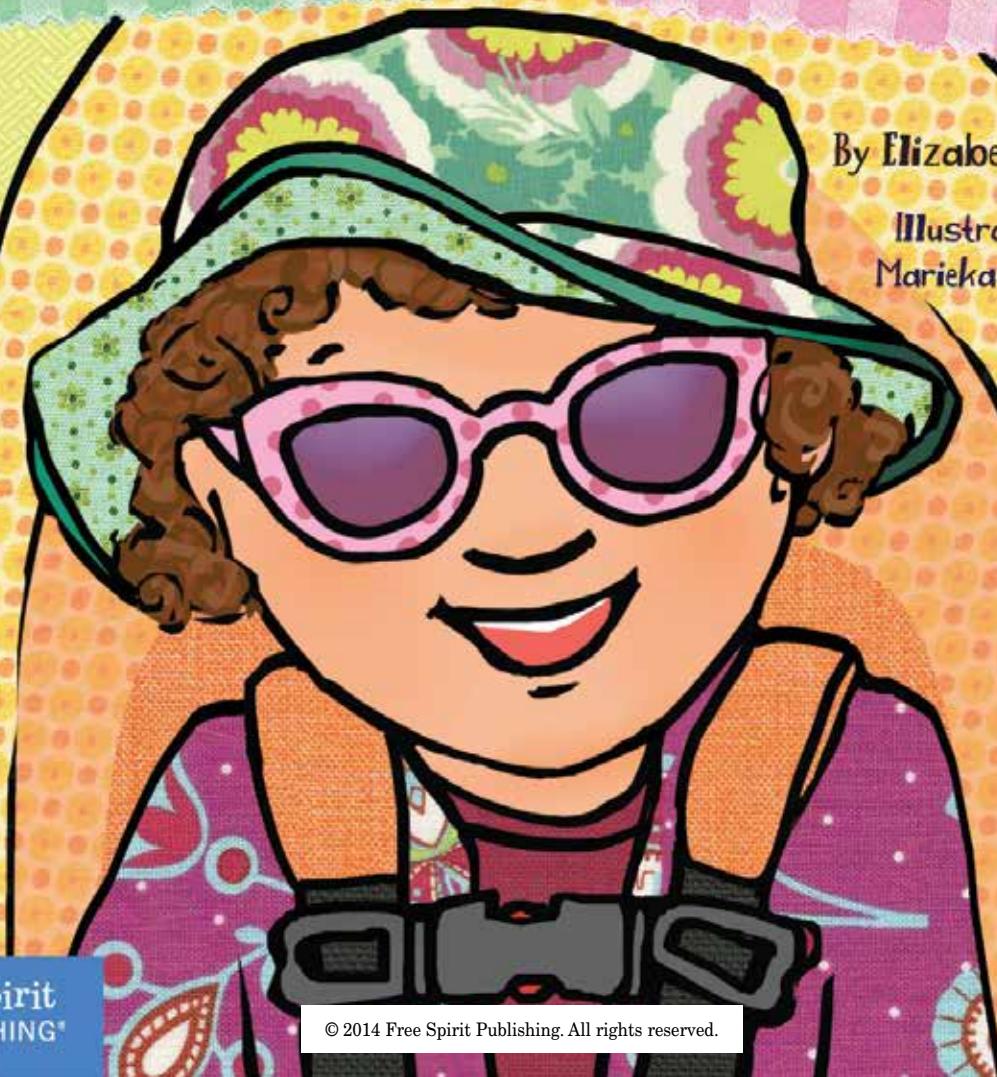


On-the-Go Time

By Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrated by
Mariëka Heinlen



What comes before **GO**?



We know . . .
Get ready!

Get set!





Get ready,
get set . . .

GO
potty first.



“On-the-Go” Tips for Parents & Caregivers

- **Keep to a schedule.** Make it easier on everyone by running errands or scheduling appointments in between your child’s meals and naps. This will ensure your child is rested, fed, and ready to go. Don’t try to cram too many stops into one trip—this often leads to frustration, tears, or meltdowns.
- **Make a “go-time” list.** Your child will do a lot better on-the-go if you’ve made a visual schedule ahead of time. On a piece of paper, draw a representation of each place you’ll be going: a book for the library, an apple for the grocery store, a stamp for the post office. Then your child will know what to expect and look forward to.
- **Get ready, get set.** Before you leave home, give your child a chance to use the bathroom, get a drink and snack to take along, and choose a favorite toy to bring. Make sure you always have a handy stash of diapers and wipes, underpants and extra clothes, raingear, juice boxes, small toys, and other essential “go-time” supplies. It’s helpful if your child eats beforehand or brings along a snack—especially if you’re running several errands. Full tummies mean calmer children!
- **Plan for some fun.** Running errands gets boring no matter *what* age you may be. Plan for breaks that will help keep everyone energized. After the grocery store, head to the park. Stop at the bakery on your way to the bank. If you’re stuck in the car for long periods, bring recorded songs or stories or have singalongs.
- **Help your child be a “super helper.”** Young children love to pitch in—this is why they’re always saying things like, “Let me do it!” You’ll encourage a sense of independence if you let your child carry the coupons, choose vegetables at the farmer’s market, or hand the clerks some change.

- **Use your resources.** Could you ask a relative or friend with young children to run errands with you? Or fill your vehicle with a few toys that the children play with only during errand time (which increases their appeal)?
- **Prepare for challenges.** You can use every one of these tips and still have one of those terrible outings where your child melts down in public. What to do? Take a few deep breaths and have your child do the same. Avoid yelling, making threats, or bribing your child with treats. Sometimes, it’s best to simply pick up your child and leave until you’re both calmer and can return to the scene. (You wouldn’t be the first parent or caregiver who had to leave a cart full of groceries behind.)
- **Savor the moments.** Going anywhere with young children takes extra time. They dawdle, need frequent breaks, and cause mishaps. Then again, they point out things that adults tend to overlook, bringing a sense of wonder everywhere they go—and that makes going places *with* them lots more fun.

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