

The Mirror Conversation

If your child spends a long time getting ready — checking, adjusting, starting over — this is probably not about vanity. It might be about something harder to name: a feeling that how they look is the one thing they can control when everything else feels unpredictable.

You do not need to diagnose it. You do not need to fix it. You just need a few good questions — asked sideways, in a moment where nobody is looking at anybody's face.

Three things before you start

Do not begin by commenting on how long they take. They already know. Naming it first will close the door you are trying to open.

Ask about feelings, not about the mirror. "How do you feel when you leave the house?" lands differently than "Why do you spend so long on your hair?"

If they say "I just like looking nice" — believe them, and keep going. Liking how you look and needing to control how you look can live in the same person at the same time. The conversation is about finding out which one is running things.

About the morning

- *Is there a part of getting ready that feels genuinely good — enjoyable, not stressful? What part?*
- *What would happen if you went to school one day without doing the thing you spend the most time on? What is the worst thing you can picture?*
- *Do you ever get ready, feel good about it, and then check one more time and feel worse?*

About being seen

- *Is there someone you know who seems easy about how they look — like they are not thinking about it? What do you think that feels like?*
- *When you walk into a room, what do you think people notice first? What do you wish they noticed?*
- *Has anyone ever paid you a compliment that somehow made you feel worse instead of better? What was it about?*

About comparison

- *When you see pictures of other people online, what happens inside you? Does something tighten, or go quiet, or speed up?*
- *Is there a difference between how you feel about yourself when you are alone and how you feel when you are about to be seen?*

— If you could stop measuring one thing about yourself — just switch that part off — what would it be?

Conversations like these are the heart of every KireKids book.

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