

Repair



What is Repair?

For the purposes of this toolkit, repair means to fix or mend a relationship.

Why is Repair Important?

- None of us are perfect and our conversations and exchanges with others will not always go how we would like. The good news is we can repair breaks in relationship and prevent further damage from occurring.
- Even when mistakes are made, repair helps children know they are loved, cared for and accepted, and helps them trust that adults will attempt to set things right.
- One of the most important ways of keeping children safe is through the adult-child relationship. Repair:
 - Teaches children how to admit when they are wrong and take responsibility.
 - Teaches children how to have trusting relationships with others.
- Maintaining a positive relationship with children can decrease misbehavior and increase cooperation.
- Seeing how mistakes affect others helps children develop empathy.



What Can Be Done?

Before having any conversation with children, it is important to be completely calm. Be prepared to respect their boundaries by allowing them to avoid eye contact and letting them make the first move to engage in physical contact with you.

When you make a mistake

- Identify the mistake that was made and apologize. Take responsibility for it.
- Ask how the child felt about the mistake, and accept any feelings expressed.
- Tell the child how you feel about having made the mistake.
- Problem solve how you will avoid the same mistake in the future and identify what each of you will do. Be specific.

When a child makes a mistake

- Use “I” statements instead of “you messed up” statements. Beginning sentences with “I” and making the statements about yourself and how you feel rather than what the child did decreases feelings of defensiveness.
- Explore how the child could have handled the situation differently and offer reassurance that you still care.
- Help the child develop a “calm down” plan and think of ways to handle difficult situations in the future.

Other tips

Playtime with children is one of the most fun and effective ways of nurturing relationships.

- If possible, devote 10 – 25 minutes each day to one-on-one playtime. During this time, plan to give the child your undivided attention, free of distractions.
- Let the child be in charge—follow his/her lead.
- Talk to the child, be curious and interested in what he/she is thinking, feeling and experiencing. Ask open-ended questions and phrase guidance positively. For example, “Tell me about your drawing,” or “What would happen if you turned the puzzle piece the other direction?”
- This is fun time—save discipline for another time.



MORE INFORMATION



I Can't Believe I Did That! And How to Make Repairs

by Jody McVittie, Sound Discipline blog

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<https://sounddiscipline.wordpress.com/2011/02/16/i-can%E2%80%99t-believe-i-did-that-%E2%80%93-and-how-to-make-repairs/>