



Repair with Connected Parenting

activity sheet

What is repair? And how to say sorry to your kids.

Sometimes as parents, despite our best intentions we get it wrong.

We yell or snap at our kids.

We 'dig in' for the sake of being right, long beyond the point of being helpful.

We don't respond with kindness in a moment that requires connection, because we had our own stuff going on.

When this happens there has usually been a 'rupture' to our relationship with our child, and what we need to do is 'repair' the rupture.

The concept of repair is well documented and according to the [Gottman institute](https://www.gottmaninstitute.com/) is "In relational terms, repair is less about fixing what is broken and more about getting **back on track.**"

Here are some do's and don't's of repair and a checklist of words that can help you:

One of the biggest myths about parenting is that there's an ideal – that it's even possible to be the parent that our child needs all the time.

Parenting is hard. It's taxing, it's physical, and it pushes your buttons in ways you never imagined before kids. Many parents are reporting burn out and fatigue at the moment following COVID 19 and increased pressures at home.

Some days – despite knowing the parent we want to be, we are a different parent – the parent we swore we'd never be.

If you think you are the only parent making these mistakes, you're not.



It takes courage to stop and ask for a do over, but it's worth it, in both the short and long term, for the sake of your relationship. Evidence shows that never making a mistake is not what our kids need. But making mistakes, owning them, and taking steps to repair the damage, is. In fact, it's one of the most useful models a child can have.

Do's of repair:

1. Take time to self-regulate first, take a parental time out, or take time to breathe.
2. Keep the apology short and sweet.
3. Keep your body open and be ready to listen.
4. Take responsibility for the part we played in things getting off track.
5. Talk about ways of dealing with the problem differently in the future.

Don'ts of repair:

1. Don't blame our child for the fact we snapped. This might sound like 'I am sorry but if only you had listened'.
2. Don't collapse. Collapsing can sound like "I am sorry, I am just so tired, and the baby had me up all night" this can have our kids feeling responsible for our emotions.

Check list of words you can use in repair when saying sorry..

- ✓ Let's start that again....
- ✓ I am sorry.
- ✓ Can I try that again? What I meant to say was....
- ✓ Can we start over. I didn't mean to yell and I can see it upset you
- ✓ Gosh, I really blew that one.....
- ✓ How can I make things better right now?

The most important aspect is that we are calm and ready to connect and hug when our child is.

The upside of rupture and repair: Our mistakes can be a great moment to model the ability to pause, reflect, change tack, and apologise if necessary. Showing this in ourselves is much more effective than just asking our kids to "say sorry" when they make mistakes.

The other big upside of rupture? The beautiful moments of connection can follow a rupture and repair moment. When we are able to tackle a conflict in a different way or understand a new perspective from our child's point of view. When we take the time to reset and get back on track our relationships benefit long term.

Extra resource on time in and repair: https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/COS_Time-In-1.pdf