

FAMILY WELLNESS

Repairing a Parenting Mistake

- Acknowledging mistakes
- The 4 Rs of recovery
- Resources for support



Parents are allowed to make mistakes. What you do after a mistake can make a big impact.

No human being is going to be the "perfect" parent all of the time. Mistakes--losing our cool, going back on a promise, threatening an inappropriate consequence, etc--are a plentiful part of the parenting journey, but what we do after making a mistake with our children often makes the biggest difference for our children's development.

Parents who acknowledge their mistakes and take steps to apologize or repair their relationship with

their children model an important life skill and communicate that the relationship is important enough to fix--rather than minimizing the mistake or passing the blame to someone else.

Parents can use the "4 Rs of Recovery" to come back from a mistake and walk through the situation with their children. We can also use these steps to help children recover from their own mistakes without shame.



The 4 Rs of Recovery

A strategy from Positive Discipline by Jane Nelson

1. **Recognize.**

Acknowledge to yourself and your child that you have made a mistake. Don't dwell on shame or guilt, but don't try to brush the mistake under the rug. State to your child: "Daddy made a mistake"

2. **Take Responsibility.**

Be specific in your responsibility in what happened. Name the mistake that was made, keeping in mind that this is creating the example for your child when they need to recover after a mistake as well. "Daddy was frustrated when you weren't listening to me. I was not being patient and I should not have yelled."

3. **Reconcile.**

Apologize to your child sincerely: "I am sorry that I yelled".

4. **Resolve**

Focus on the future by thinking of solutions, rather than dwelling on the mistake. Invite your child to give suggestions as well, or provide a solution to their part in the situation: "Daddy is going to try to take some deep breaths before I get angry and start to yell. What's something you want to try to do to help you listen to daddy?"

...and Remember you are modeling.

Each opportunity that you take to use the Four "R"s of recovery with your children is an opportunity to model for them what they can do when they have a mistake. When your child has made a mistake, you can invite them to move through these steps as well.

"An apology is the super glue of life. It can repair about anything."

– LYNN JOHNSTON

Resources

For continued support

- Read our "[Good Enough Parent](#)" Newsletter to practice giving yourself grace when you make a mistake.
- Read about the 4 R Strategy from [Positive Discipline](#).
- More about [how and why to apologize](#) to children.
- [One-minute video](#) about the power of apologizing with children.
- Listen to this podcast about [helping children learn to apologize through modeling](#).

