

Taking Responsibility and Rebuilding Trust

A mistake is something that happened, not who you are. Use this page when you feel ready to think about one everyday situation. You can write, draw, speak, skip a question, or ask for a helper.

Example: I used my cousin's markers without asking and left them uncapped. I can explain what happened, help check the markers, and ask before borrowing next time.

1. What happened? Describe actions, not labels.

What would someone have seen or heard? Avoid words like "bad kid".

2. Which part was my action or choice?

I can own my part without taking the blame for everything.

3. Who was affected, and what do I know?

What did they say? What could I ask instead of guessing their feelings?

4. What is one safe, fair way I could help repair it?

Examples: tidy up, return an item, correct a story, or ask what help is welcome.

You do not have to accept blame for being hurt, bullied or mistreated. Tell a trusted adult if a situation feels unsafe.

My repair and follow-through plan

An apology is a choice to speak honestly, not a way to demand forgiveness. The other person may need time or space. Do not offer hugs or touch unless wanted.

1. Words I could use, when I am ready

"I did _____. It affected _____. I am sorry for _____. I can offer _____."

2. One promise I can realistically keep

What will I do, when, and what reminder or adult help will I need?

3. After trying: what did I actually do?

Record one action. Did the other person want a different kind of repair?

4. What needs another try? When will we check back?

If I forgot or could not do it, what should I change or ask help with?

Trust is not a prize someone must give you after one apology. Keep practising fair actions. Adults must also own mistakes and keep children safe.

Coach guide and references

Purpose and setup. For roughly ages 8-12, adapted to the child's development and needs. Allow 10-15 minutes per activity page, plus a short review later. These timings and age ranges are design choices. No scoring or assessment is required. Obtain caregiver consent where needed and the child's willing participation.

Facilitation. Use an ordinary incident, not abuse, coercion or an allegation needing investigation. Begin with the child's account; distinguish intention, action, impact and what was outside their control. Never force a confession, apology, hug or reconciliation. Help the child offer proportionate repair, then agree on one observable action and a review. Do not condition basic care, food, safety or affection on completion. Model adult accountability too.

Access and privacy. Offer drawing, talking, a scribe, extra processing time or a quiet space. Use fictional examples if preferred. Participation is voluntary. Do not display completed sheets or demand sensitive details. Explain limits of confidentiality and follow local safeguarding procedures.

Research basis and limits. Vaish et al. studied how young children interpreted remorse and apologies after accidental harm [1]. This developmental research informs discussion of impact; it does not test this worksheet or prove that an apology restores trust. WHO supports evidence-based parenting programmes [2], and UNICEF describes realistic expectations and non-violent guidance [3]. The repair prompts are original coaching activities.

Educational note. Original coaching material for everyday skills, not medical advice, diagnosis, psychological treatment or a clinical assessment. These worksheets have not been clinically validated. Seek qualified help for persistent distress or difficulties affecting daily life. Immediate danger requires urgent local help.

Related resource. [BeyondPsychub worksheet collection](#) | [Small-actions confidence worksheet](#)

References

1. Vaish, A., Carpenter, M., & Tomasello, M. (2011). Young children's responses to guilt displays. *Developmental Psychology*, 47, 1248-1262. [Read source](#)
2. WHO (2023). Guidelines on parenting interventions to prevent maltreatment and enhance parent-child relationships with children aged 0-17 years. [Read source](#)
3. UNICEF. How to discipline your child the smart and healthy way. Accessed 12 September 2026. [Read source](#)