

COOL PARENTING CHALLENGE

**MISTAKES
HAPPEN**



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No one likes making mistakes, especially Children, but we can help them find ways they can learn from them. Cool Parenting challenge will help to teach kids to embrace mistakes and cope when they happen.

How often have we given kids grief for dropping a glass cup accidentally, forgetting things at school.

This stigma against mistakes carries over into adulthood, too. Even the most motivated of us don't like mistakes—they're the hassles and setbacks that keep us from reaching our goals as quickly as we had hoped. Its unavoidable, many of us wish we would simply get it right the first time around.

But given the certainty of mistakes, we need to see the positive aspects they offer, both for ourselves and especially our kids.

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HOW TO TEACH KIDS TO EMBRACE MISTAKES

For one thing, mistakes are humbling. No one is perfect, and kids need to realize they can never nor should try to be. No one gets to their goals immediately—we go through many mistakes and plenty of practice.

Mistakes also force us to focus on the process, not the final outcome. We've all heard the importance of the journey, instead of trying to get to the end by any means necessary. You wouldn't want your child to push other kids aside just so they can get to the finish line first.

Mistakes can also act as an encouragement for kids not to give up. Part of raising a resilient child is developing the grit to keep getting up after every fall. And finally, mistakes help them find solutions and are part of the learning process. Instead of feeling defeated, they will see where they could improve or change.

That said, the benefits of learning from mistakes doesn't always make them any easier to experience. No child wants to see someone else get goal after goal, while they can't score not even once. No doubt: the mistakes themselves aren't exactly pleasant.

Still, we can teach kids to make the most of them, to see them in a positive light. We can change how we talk about and react when they make mistakes, and highlight their benefits.

SHOW THAT MISTAKES CAN TEACH US LESSONS

Mistakes can teach your child so much, from where they can improve to what they shouldn't do again. Rather than treating mistakes as something to avoid, show them all that they can learn from them. After all, rarely do we reach our accomplishments on the first try, and no great figures got to the top in one day.

Instead, we learn from our blunders, especially when they force us to grow into better versions of ourselves and develop self-confidence. They show us the steps we shouldn't do or how to do them differently and reveal what works and the tactics we should reconsider.

Mistakes aren't stumbling blocks or failures. Think of them as teachers showing your child a new or different way to do things.

This is your chance to challenge yourself and make the changes you've been meaning to make.



TEACH YOUR CHILD TO FIND THE REASON BEHIND THE MISTAKES

Digging deep and finding out where we went wrong.

Staring at your child's mistakes in their schoolwork won't reveal the answer. Instead, they have to see where they went wrong so they can best correct it.

Or maybe they continue to forget to take their library book to school every week. Help them develop the habit of putting the book in their bag, writing a reminder a simple scribble on a note to themselves and taping it to the wall.

Finding the reason behind mistakes—and learning to fix them—is the only way they can learn from them.



A man with dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking towards the right and pointing his right index finger forward. The background is a solid light pink color.

WATCH YOUR REACTION TO YOUR CHILD'S MISTAKES

Kids Make Mistakes. Accidents happen. Let's not focus so much on the mistake and make them feel bad about it. We needed to put our disappointment aside so it wouldn't colour the child's view of mistakes and accidents.

You see, our reaction to our kids' mistakes can send various messages. Let's say you told your child to put her dishes in the sink. Except they didn't just "put" them in, they tossed them in, assuming that's how it's done. As a result, a glass that had been sitting in the sink shattered.

Sure, you could reprimand them for the mistake so they know they did something wrong. But they might feel ashamed or confused since they thought they were following your instructions. They might take it as a personal attack.

What if, instead, you kept your disappointment brief and focused on what they could do next time? You could show them how to put her dish in the sink gently, or have them try again, this time being careful. You're reassuring them that mistakes happen, but they can also serve a purpose. They can learn from mistakes and what not to do without the feeling of shame.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF MISTAKES

Try this: The next time your child makes a mistake, say, “That’s interesting!” or “Look at that,” first.

This response doesn’t always apply to all mistakes. I can’t imagine any parent saying “That’s interesting!” when her child pees all over the floor or smashes a glass in the sink. But let’s look at another example:

Let’s say they are playing the piano and needed to play a particular song as outlined in the sheet music. Except they don’t. It seemed no matter how many times they tried, they couldn’t get the sequence right.

What if, instead of immediately correcting their “mistake,” you say, “That’s interesting!” You can use the mistake as an opportunity to create a different sequence, or work on how to use that bit they did in a new piece. Creativity can grow from mistakes.

Yes, you’ll want to correct and practice their mistake so they can play the song, but show them that it’s not something to feel embarrassed about. Instead, their mistake could actually develop into something magnificent.



TEACH YOUR CHILD HOW TO COPE WITH FRUSTRATION

Ah, the frustration. That can be the most difficult aspect of mistakes for children and the most patience-testing for parents.

Because no matter how much we embrace mistakes, they're often unpleasant and cause a lot of anxiety. Imagine putting so much effort into a task but still making mistakes. Trying to solve a math problem that makes no sense or figuring out a puzzle to no avail.

Mistakes are inevitable, no doubt, so we need to teach our kids how to cope with the ensuing frustration. For instance, your child can...

Ask for help. When something feels difficult, let him know he can always ask for help. Asking doesn't mean they failed or is incompetent, especially since some tasks can be beyond their developmental stage.

Take a break. Tell them to take a break when they get frustrated. A quick one-minute break can be all he needs to gather their thoughts, restart, and see the task in a different way. And they will be more patient and calm instead of agitated, which will help them try again.

Give them a hug. Coping with frustration sometimes means getting non-verbal support. Hold them and let them crumble in your arms and release their emotions.

ADMIT YOUR OWN MISTAKES

We won't send the message that mistakes are okay when we deny the ones we make. Instead, fess up each time you make one.

Your mistakes can be as simple as spilling water on the table or making a mess when you dropped a bowl on the floor. Maybe admitting mistakes runs deeper, like apologizing to your child for yelling and losing your temper.

You can also describe mistakes you've made in the past. While you don't want to glorify them, you can mention a few of the simpler ones so she doesn't feel alone.

Admitting your mistakes shows that everyone makes them. They also don't define who we are, and we can instead use them to our advantage by learning from them.



DON'T RESCUE YOUR CHILD FROM MISTAKES

Let's say your child has a favourite action figure. You've reminded them many times to keep it in the same place after playing with it, so they don't lose it. (Because we know how difficult it can be to find a tiny figure in a sea of toys!)

Except... they still didn't take your advice. And one day, they couldn't find the little figure no matter how hard they searched.

So, they ask you buy them another one. If you do, you'd end the frustration, the whining, and the arguing, but doing so won't hold them accountable.

When you rescue them from all their mistakes, you deny them the opportunity to learn from them. They won't take you seriously the next time about keeping their toys in the same place, especially when they know you'll buy them another one.

"Kids can only learn so much if we solve every problem they run into. And this is hard for parents to do. After all, it's difficult to watch our kids struggle and experience failure and discomfort. If we had it our way, they'd never make mistakes or have to keep trying.

But with each rescue comes another ding to their desire to display their competence. Just as they were trying to prove they're capable, mum or dad comes in and shows that they're not. As you can imagine, this feels discouraging."

Instead, teach her how to cope with the natural consequences of their mistakes, and make cleaning up part of her routine. You won't be able to (nor should you) rescue them from life's disappointments. Teaching them how to cope and learn from mistakes is a much more valuable tool.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CHILD FOR ADMITTING OR FIXING MISTAKES

“Why is he crying?” I asked my kids, referring to my younger son who had run to me in tears.

“He got hurt,” my eldest responded.

“How?”

“I hit him with the ball,” he admitted, his eyes lowered to the floor.

As tempting as it was to launch into a lecture about being more careful, I had to remember that he had just admitted a mistake—even when he didn’t have to. I didn’t jump into why we don’t throw balls at other people’s faces, and instead first acknowledged him for being honest and confessing.

Because admitting our mistakes is hard. I have a difficult time admitting where I had gone wrong or the part I played in an argument. When you notice your child sharing their mistake, acknowledge them—thank them, even—for doing so.

This doesn’t encourage them to misbehave. They won’t think, “Wow, mum praised me for being honest. I’m going to hit my brother in the face again!” You will of course want to follow up with what they can or can’t do, but they will learn that telling the truth was right, even if hitting was wrong.

CONCLUSION

We learned how important mistakes can be and how to encourage our kids to embrace them. All these strategies boil down to one thing: the way we view and talk about mistakes.

Show your child that mistakes are our best teachers, especially when you encourage her to find the reason behind them. Focus on the positive outcomes of mistakes and be mindful of how you react when they happen.

Teach them how to cope with the ensuing frustration and avoid rescuing them each time they make a mistake. Admit the times you make them, and finally, acknowledge and even thank them for admitting or fixing the ones they make.

So, you see, mistakes can actually be the greatest gift in an otherwise frustrating experience. And childhood is the best time to “practice” coping with them, when the stakes aren’t as high. From simple mistakes like spilling milk to large ones they will face in life, they can be some of the best lessons they will learn.