

How to say sorry properly



A hollow sorry is worthless and teaches the child nothing. If a child is not made to feel shame through name-calling or labels or harsh punishment he is more likely to be genuinely remorseful and willing to say sorry. When she is really ready to apologise it needs to be more than just 'sorry'. A form of words that shows genuine regret is as follows:

1. I'm sorry for...:

Be specific. Show the person you're apologizing to that you really understand what they are upset about. *I'm sorry for saying that nobody wants to be your friend.*

2. This is wrong because...:

This might take some more thinking, but this is one of the most important parts. Until the child understands why it was wrong or how it hurt someone's feelings, it's unlikely they will change. *This is wrong because it hurt your feelings and made you feel bad. And it isn't true.*

3. In the future, I will...:

Use positive language, and encourage the child to say what he WILL do, not what he won't do. *In the future, I will keep unkind words in my head. I will try to say how I am feeling instead. I sometimes feel as if people don't want to be my friend and I'd rather you felt that way than me.*

4. Will you forgive me?

This form of words obviously has a lot of similarities with The Mistakes Process. As well as the sorry, the child who did wrong may need to make amends by doing something kind or friendly for the other person. This, together with the genuineness of the apology, makes it more likely that the relationship will be repaired.