A mistake and a next step: a child-friendly reflection sheet

Print this sheet, or talk through the prompts together. Use only the parts that help. Keep completed copies private.

Offer this when your child is calm enough to reflect. They can draw, tell you the answers or skip it. Do not use it as a consequence after a difficult moment.

What happened?

Describe one event, without turning it into a label about yourself.

The thing that went wrong: _____

What I was hoping would happen: _____

How it felt: _____

Example: “My tower fell before I finished it. I wanted to show someone. I felt cross and disappointed.”

What would help right now?

A pause.

Somebody to listen.

Help with one part.

Another way to try.

My own idea: _____

The person I can ask: _____

Continue: A mistake and a next step: a child-friendly reflection sheet

Separate the mistake from me

The unkind thought I noticed, if I want to write it: _____

A fairer sentence: "_____ went wrong. I can _____."

Example: "This sum went wrong. I can ask which step I missed." A fair sentence does not have to pretend that you feel happy.

One possible next step

A smaller attempt I could make: _____

Help or information I would need: _____

When I might feel ready: _____

For the adult

One specific effort or choice I noticed: _____

Is there a repeated problem at school or home to discuss? _____

Something enjoyable we can do without judging a result: _____

If harsh self-talk or distress keeps returning, seek support from school or a health professional. This sheet is a conversation aid, not a treatment or a reason to delay help.

Browse all free resources.

For ideas to use alongside this resource, read When mistakes feel enormous: helping a child try again.

More help for your family

Free printable resource. Help a child describe an upsetting event, choose support and record an adult's next steps.