

Help Your Child Learn From Mistakes



Children—like the rest of us—make mistakes. But with help from you, your child can use those mistakes to learn and grow.

Since every child is likely to encounter some problems in life, it's important for them to learn how to handle setbacks. You can teach your child that every problem is also an opportunity in disguise. Here are some ideas you can use to help your child bounce back and keep going.

QuickTips

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Turn **DEFEATS** Into *VICTORIES*

All kids experience defeats. They hope for the lead in the play ... but instead, they're invited to paint the scenery. They try out for the team ... but sit on the bench. They think they're ready for the test ... but do poorly.

Children's mistakes and defeats can be powerful tools to help them learn and get smarter. The secret is turning mistakes into learning opportunities. Here's how:

- **Praise effort and progress.** When your child tries hard but falls short, you can say, "I'm proud of you for giving it your best shot. You are really improving! I know you will get it."
- **Find something positive.** Together, draw up a list of things your child has already learned, or can learn, from this experience. Did your child learn any new skills or meet a new friend? Has

your child gained the determination to try harder? What might your child do differently next time? Help your child see that what may initially seem like a defeat is also a great chance to learn and improve chances of future success.

- **Focus on successes.** When your child is disappointed, point out all the things that went well. Mention your child's writing ability or all the hard work that went into a project.



Choose Your Words Carefully!

Successful people in any field rarely use the word "failure." They may talk about a "glitch," a "problem" or a "snag." But even when something they try doesn't work out as they'd planned, successful people try to learn from the experience. When your

child is having difficulties, don't allow the use of words like "failure" and "dumb." Instead, help your child see the positive side of the experience and use constructive words to describe it.

Is Your Child Under Too Much Pressure?

Parents may put pressure on their children without realizing it. But there is a difference between *pressure* and *encouragement*. Are you putting too much pressure on your child to do well in school or sports? Here are some questions to ask yourself:

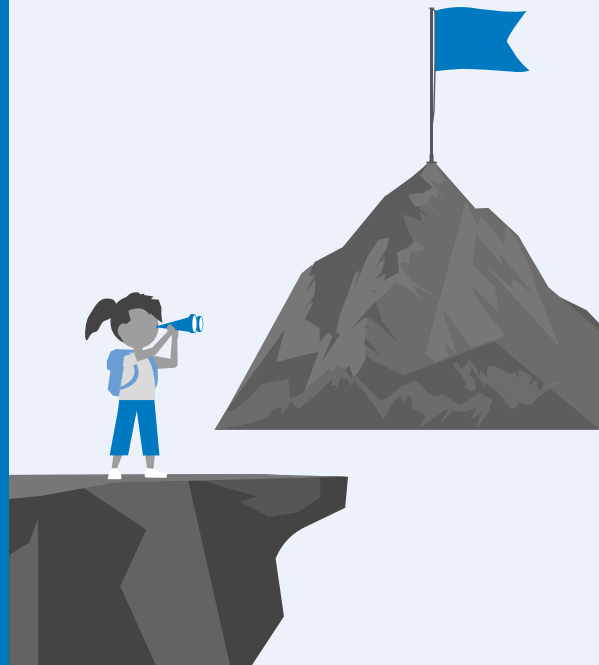
- **How do you react** after an athletic event? Do you criticize your child's performance? Or do you try to focus on how much fun it was to participate?
- **What happens when** your child brings home a test? Do you first talk about the wrong answers? Or do you look for what your child got right?
- **What do you do** when your child helps you with a household chore? Do you point out mistakes? Or do you thank your child for helping and contributing to the family good?
- **Do most of your conversations** focus on the things your child hasn't done? ("Clean your room!" "You forgot to feed the dog.") Or do you try to say something positive as often as possible?

There is nothing wrong with being critical of your child's actions. The question is one of balance. Experts say to get the best results, you should focus more attention on what your child does correctly—and offer praise more often than criticism.

Goals Help Children Learn

Dreams are an important part of growing up, learning and succeeding in school. Students who dream big set higher goals for themselves. They work harder to reach their goals and don't stop trying if they make a mistake along the way. As a result, they are more likely to be successful.

You can help by encouraging your child to set high goals and not get discouraged. "What grade do you expect to be able to earn in math next time?" "What are you hoping to learn from this project?" "What do you want to accomplish in the game on Friday?"



Everyone Makes Mistakes!

The best part is that you can teach your child to learn from them. And learning from mistakes will help your child succeed in school—and in life.

If I had to live my life over again, I'd dare to make more mistakes next time.

—Nadine Stair

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