

4-Step Apology: Apologizing to Your Child

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1. **Make an unconditional apology:** An unconditional apology focuses on our responsibility in the matter, not our child's. It should sound something like this, "I was wrong for what I did and I am so sorry." Period. We don't make excuses or point the finger at our child. A conditional apology sounds like this, "I am sorry, BUT IF YOU wouldn't have made me..." That is NOT an unconditional apology.
2. **Humbly ask for the gift of forgiveness:** Again, since forgiveness is not a given, we must ask for it. After our apology, we need to sincerely ask our child to forgive us.
3. **Follow up with action:** This is what makes apologizing and asking for forgiveness effective. Our actions and attitudes need to speak as loudly as our words. If we keep making the same mistake over and over again, our apologies will start to ring hollow.
4. **Give your child time:** Even if our child does accept our apology and grant forgiveness, we can't expect things to be better right away. She might get over the small things quickly (especially if she's a young child), but for bigger things (and older children), it can take time for our child to warm up to us again. Be patient. Time will show that you are changing and are sincere about not hurting your child again.