

Rupture + Repair With Children

The R.E.P.A.I.R.™ Parenting Framework

By Meghan L. Maynard

www.elarainstitute.ca

Mistakes happen. What matters most is how we come back together. This sheet is a reminder of what to do after a hard moment.

What is a Rupture?

A rupture is a disconnection in the relationship — a moment when a child feels misunderstood, unsafe, or unseen. It might look like yelling, withdrawing, harsh words, or emotional shutdown.

Why Repair Matters

Repair teaches children:

- That relationships can withstand hard moments.
- That it's okay to make mistakes.
- That they are still loved, even when things get messy.
- How to make amends and take accountability.

The Repair Process

Coming back together after a rupture in your relationship with your child.

1. Pause and Regulate Yourself

Before attempting repair, you need to come back into a calm, grounded state. Reacting while you're still dysregulated often leads to more rupture.

Try: Stepping into another room, taking 5 slow breaths, drinking water, or placing a hand on your heart.

Remember: Co-regulation starts with you.

Why this matters: Repair is relational — and connection can't happen if one or both people are still in fight, flight, or freeze.

2. Name What Happened

State what occurred in a clear, simple, and age-appropriate way. The goal is to bring coherence and understanding to what just happened.

Example: "I yelled earlier. That wasn't okay."

Avoid over-explaining, justifying, or blaming the child.

Why this matters: Children are meaning-makers. When we name what happened, we give their nervous systems a narrative to organize around — and we show that grown-ups take responsibility for their part.

3. Validate the Child's Experience

Let your child know that their feelings make sense. You don't have to agree with their behaviour — you're affirming their emotional reality.

 Try:

“That must've felt scary when I raised my voice.”

“I imagine that felt unfair or confusing.”

“It makes sense that you felt upset.”

Why this matters: Validation builds safety and trust. It lets your child know they don't have to carry their emotions alone — and that their inner world is seen and held with care.

4. Take Responsibility

Own your behavior without defensiveness. Apologize sincerely — and resist the urge to blame, lecture, or minimize.

Say:

“That was my mistake.”

“I'm sorry for how I handled that.”

“You didn't deserve that tone.”

Why this matters: Responsibility models accountability — not shame. It shows your child that grown-ups make mistakes and make them right.

5. Reconnect

Repair isn't just words — it's emotional reconnection. That might be a hug, a game, reading together, or simply saying, “We're okay.”

Offer reconnection gently:

“I care about you.”

“I love you — even when we have hard moments.”

“Do you want to play something together?”

Why this matters: Repair completes the stress cycle. It reaffirms the bond and helps children integrate the rupture as something that can be repaired — not feared.

Things to Remember

- Repair is not about perfection — it's about connection.

- You don't need to fix everything immediately. Sometimes repair happens after space.
- Kids learn to repair by watching how we do it.
- Your repair might be the most powerful parenting moment of the day.

www.elarainstitute.ca