

## Mini guide: Saying sorry

**No doubt, following an incident between one child and another, you will have witnessed a child saying “sorry” in an automatic, parrot fashion.**

No remorse will have been shown by the ‘aggressor’, as they don’t have any understanding of why they should be sorry. They will have just thought that uttering this short word can absolve them of blame.

What should you do as a practitioner at this point?  
Should you encourage the use of the word 'sorry' to resolve all incidents between children?

Saying 'sorry' to another child after an incident should only be suggested if the child is developmentally ready to understand why they are saying it.



The child needs to be able to genuinely show remorse and want to make things better. Otherwise, all you are doing is forcing a child to say a specific word to get themselves out of trouble. This doesn’t have any real impact on developing their empathy skills. It may also mean that the behaviour continues.

Here are some alternative solutions to the automatic saying of 'sorry'. You could:

- Focus on why the child’s actions were not appropriate. You could ask the child, how does hitting make you feel? How would you feel if somebody hit you? Explain that It makes people very sad because it hurts
- Ask children what they can do to make the 'victim' feel better (this could be fetching them a toy or sharing toys with them, a rub on the back, etc.)
- Be a good role model
- Support children’s understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is unacceptable by constructing and reviewing room rules together.

### Find out more

Contact our training team for Positive Behaviour strategies on 01484 407070 or email [training@ndna.org.uk](mailto:training@ndna.org.uk)

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