

Making Mistakes Is Okay

A free printable social story for ages 4-10

Perfectionism and fear of failure can make children avoid trying at all, tearing up papers or quitting at the first error. This story reframes mistakes as how brains learn, supporting a growth mindset in concrete kid language. It helps anxious learners, and teachers often read it before introducing challenging new material.

Everyone makes mistakes. Kids, grown-ups, and even teachers make them.

A mistake is when something does not go the way I planned.

Maybe I spill, mix up letters, or forget the answer.

Mistakes are not bad. Mistakes are how brains learn.

When I make a mistake, my brain grows a little stronger.

Sometimes a mistake makes me feel embarrassed or frustrated. Those feelings are okay.

I can take a breath and say, "Oops, that's okay."

I can say, "I can't do it yet." Yet means I am still learning.

I can try again, try a new way, or ask for help.

If my mistake bumps someone else, I can say, "I'm sorry," and help fix it.

People still love me when I make mistakes.

Every person I admire made lots of mistakes while learning.

Making mistakes means I am trying, and trying is how I grow.

Tips for Reading This Story Together

- Narrate your own mistakes cheerfully and visibly: oops, I burned the toast, I will try a lower setting.
- Praise process over outcome: you tried three different ways lands better than you are so smart.
- Adopt the word yet as a family habit and gently append it when your child says I can't do it.
- Share age-appropriate stories of famous failures, like inventors whose first tries flopped.

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