



Teaching Your Child to Ask for Help

A lot of hard moments start the same way: something's too difficult, too slow, or not going their way, and there's no way to ask for help built in yet. Teaching "ask for help" as an early, reliable skill can prevent a surprising number of meltdowns before they start.

"The goal isn't a child who never struggles. It's a child who knows what to do the moment they do."

HOW TO TEACH IT

- 1 Pick one clear way to ask.** A word, sign, phrase, or card, and use it consistently, everywhere, not just at home.
- 2 Catch moments of natural difficulty and prompt the request immediately.** Before frustration builds too high to learn from.
- 3 Respond to the request quickly and positively.** Every single time at first, so it's clearly worth using.
- 4 Model it yourself out loud.** "Hmm, this jar is stuck. I need help!" shows the words in action.

AS IT DEVELOPS

- ☐ Fade your prompting gradually, from doing it with them, to gesturing toward it, to waiting for them to initiate.
- ☐ Praise the request specifically, not just the outcome. "You asked for help, nice work," separate from solving the problem itself.
- ☐ Notice which situations still skip straight to frustration, and go back to practicing those specifically.

TRY THIS

Set up small, safe "stuck" moments on purpose, a container that's slightly hard to open, a puzzle piece just out of reach, and prompt "say help" or model the sign the instant you see frustration start.

BUILDING IT INTO DAILY LIFE

Look for small, everyday chances to practice, opening a snack, reaching something, a game that's a little too hard.

Keep the request available across settings, home, school, the car, not just the room where you practiced it.

Celebrate it being used spontaneously, especially the first few times, since that's the real goal.

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