

**The Big Idea:** Parents can begin the process of rebuilding trust with children by offering structure, consistency, and regular routines.

## Guest Post: Rebuilding Trust

🗨️ Parental Addiction 🧒 Age 2 to 6 🕒 1-4 Min



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Congratulations. It takes courage, strength, and commitment to recover from the disease of addiction. Recovery is the greatest gift you can give your children. It opens the door to many possibilities, including the opportunity to rebuild trust with your children. In early recovery, it's easy to focus on what has been lost: trust, time, relationships. This can result in a strong desire to "make everything right" immediately. Recovery takes time—slow down and take a deep breath!

Parents can begin the process of rebuilding trust with children by offering structure, consistency, and regular routines. Keep promises and when you can't follow through, sit down and honestly explain why. Don't try to hide your feelings. Tell your children, "I'm feeling sad, mad, scared, (or whatever), but I'm okay. I have other adults who are helping me." Children often know more than you realize. Listen, and allow your children to express their big feelings without getting defensive or immediately trying to fix things.

While it's important to apologize, say your words and then move forward and get involved in your children's lives. Actions speak much louder than words, and your children want your time and attention! Read a book together, shoot hoops, or take a walk. Do a craft project, kick a soccer ball around, or cook a meal. You might try committing to weekly one-hour play dates and plan a few regular family dinners together.

You'll have lots of opportunities to practice patience, because your children need time and space to learn to trust you again. Give them a chance to heal. Slow down your expectations. Tell them daily that you are working on your healing with the help of safe people.

Keep being the best parent you can be, one day at a time. Progress, not perfection.

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