

Do-Over

Use this tool when the impact of children's words or actions does not reflect their intentions.

Step 1: Invite

When you notice children struggling with collaboration or conflict, invite them to participate in a "Do-Over."

Step 2: Connect

Check in with each child to identify what happened. Assume that the child's intention was good, that she was doing the best she could in that moment, and that she is open to trying another way because she wants to be successful and build friendship, not break it.

- *What happened?*
- *What do you need?*
- *What do you notice about your friend?*

Step 3: Explore perspectives

Ask each child about both the impact and the intent of their words or actions. Choose from, or adapt, the questions below:

- *What were your intentions?*
- *What did you hope was going to happen?*
- *What were you trying to do?*
- *What really happened?*
- *Did something surprise you?*
- *How do you think others experienced those actions?*
- *What did you notice about other people's feelings?*

Step 4: Ask Questions

Use this information to ask further questions that will support children to imagine a different possibility.

- *What's another strategy you could try?*
- *What do you want to do differently?*
- *What would feel more like friendship?*

Step 5: Imagine

Invite children to imagine a new way to approach the situation and to try the interaction again.

- *Would you like a chance to try that again?*

Step 6: Reflect

Make sure each child feels seen and heard.

- *How did it feel?*
- *What did you notice?*
- *Did you feel seen and heard?*

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Children need to practice repairing mistakes.

Inventors rely on collaboration and use play as a strategy for learning in a conflict-rich environment. They are exploring new terrain, which means they are sure to make uncomfortable mistakes. *Do-Overs* provide learners a low-risk opportunity to deepen their understanding of the needs of different parties when collaboration becomes challenging; they offer an alternative to punishment, blame, and shame. *Do-Overs* help learners repair relationships when they break down, identify how to move forward in different ways, and assume agency. Because *Do-Overs* invite children to literally “do over” something that went wrong, children have an opportunity to experience the feelings of having the same situation go well. These feelings support the development of healthy pathways in children’s brains so children are less likely to choose the same unproductive behavior the next time.



Suggested Time Frame

It can take as little as 10-15 minutes or as much as a couple of days to carry out a *Do-Over*. Although *Do-Overs* may take time, especially at the beginning, the long-term results are a classroom and school culture where children will be able to work together and remedy misunderstandings independently.

When and How

You can use a *Do-Over* for any kind of hurt: unnecessary physicality, hurtful words, miscommunications or misunderstandings, or exclusionary behavior.

Tips and Variations

- Early in the year, perform, or ask children to perform, a role play of a *Do-Over* to support everyone’s understanding of the practice.
- Do not expect *Do-Overs* to work perfectly the first time. You will get better over time!
- Remember that a *Do-Over* is most effective when children have cooled off. This is not a “drop-everything and use this” tool. Wait until children are cooled off and you have time to work with them.
- During large group meetings, ask children to share a successful *Do-Over* so the strategies used can become a “go-to” resource for similar problems. This also helps children develop empathy for others in similar situations.
- Teachers can use *Do-Overs*, too, when they make a mistake that needs repair.

For video examples and reflections on practices that inspire inventiveness, become an Opal School Online Sustaining Member at learning.opalschool.org.

