

Talk to your child about the importance of honesty

Research shows that by the time children reach elementary school, most know the difference between being honest and lying. But that doesn't make telling the truth easy!

To encourage honesty:

- Talk about it. Ask your child if she believes that honesty is the best policy. Does she want others to tell her the truth? When does she think it's OK to lie?
- Discuss the consequences of lying. Lying destroys trust. If your child makes a habit of lying to people, they won't believe what she says—even when she is telling the truth!
- Be a role model. Children are good “lie detectors.” They notice when parents tell the truth—and when they don't.
- Create opportunities for telling the truth. Say, “You broke my vase,” instead of, “Did you do this?”
- React calmly. When your child lies, don't label her a “liar.” Express confidence that she will make better choices in the future.
- Reward trustworthiness. If your child is truthful in a difficult situation, compliment her!

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