

PARENTING TIPS

Dealing With Dishonesty

Living with a child who is dishonest is not easy. You're always second-guessing her, wondering if she's lying again. Sometimes you suspect that your son is doing the wrong thing, but you can't prove it. He may deny it, and there doesn't seem to be anything you can do.

In those moments of doubt, be careful not to push too hard. Don't try to force a confession or prove something you can't. After all, your child may be innocent this time, and you don't want to overemphasize a lack of trust. Remember that a child who lies will provide you with a number of opportunities to confront. That's an unfortunate reality, but it means that you don't have to press an unclear situation. You can wait for one that is clearer and determine to make an issue out of it at that time. Other times, you might simply make an observation about the importance of honesty and move on.

On the other hand, when you know that your child is lying, you'll want to be firm. Requiring confession is often the first step toward change. Many times it's helpful to have a child actually say the words, "I lied." There's something painfully helpful about being honest about lying. Of course, other discipline and strategies will likely be necessary for a child who lies, but keep in mind you're working for the long term. Openness and honesty with God starts with our relationships at home. The goal is for our kids to develop a lifestyle of honesty, so when they fail, they need to be able to confess and feel forgiven.

Look for ways to correct on the spot, but also use lying as a cue that you have some greater work to do in the character department. As you teach, correct, and pray for your children who have lied, you will be working along with god to develop a heart of integrity in them. Your investment will be worth it in the end.

This parenting tip comes from the book Good and Angry, Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN