

TIP SHEET: **Lying**

Ages Affected: 3–4 years old

Around this age children begin to test you and see if they can get away with not telling you the truth. The first time your child lies to you, usually around 3 years old, it can be quite a shock.

Why does my child lie?

While there's something about lying that really gets under the skin of most parents, realize that dishonesty in all of its forms—denial, cheating, boasting, and telling outrageous lies—is normal behavior that every child tries at some point. Children lie for several reasons including attention, to avoid consequences, or because they hear their parents lie.

Children need to learn that no matter what they have done, they must tell the truth. Setting a good example for your child will create a great relationship with her built on trust.

Here are some tips to help teach your child to tell the truth:

- Set a good example. Do not lie to your child or to others when your child is present.
- Explain why lying is unacceptable. Do not bring this up when you are scolding your child for lying, but rather during a calm conversation with your child.
- Make it clear that lying is not telling the truth.
- Don't overreact when your child lies. The more you react, the less approachable you will be next time. Overreacting may also encourage him to lie again.
- When you catch your child lying, ask her why she is lying. She will most likely deny it or make excuses. Don't give in, simply tell her that you do not want her to lie to you ever again.



- Decide ahead of time what the consequences will be when your child is not telling you the truth, for example, taking away fun activities. Let your child know this is what happens when he lies to you.
- Give him a chance to tell you the truth. If you know he has not cleaned his room, ask him and see if he lies to you. This is good practice for your child to learn that they cannot get away with lying to you.
- Praise your child for telling the truth.