

6 Ways to Keep Your Kids Honest

Our world, in big ways and small, gives a wink and a nod to dishonesty. This makes it difficult to bring up children who are fully committed to truthfulness.

So, how do we teach our children to tell the truth even when it's hard? There are lots of ways, and they all start early:

1. It's never cute. There's a great temptation to overlook the dishonesty of preschoolers because we're a little charmed and amused by it. But it lays a foundation that will be hard to undo down the road. Save yourself the extra work by catching the lies of little tykes and correcting them immediately.

2. Watch the back door. Often, dishonesty in our children doesn't come barreling in the front door with a big whopper of a lie. It starts small, with a little fudging of the facts or an omission of key information. But it's intentionally deceptive—and they know it. When you're talking with your children, listen intently. It's the only way you'll pick up on the telltale signs of a misleading story and be able to blow the whistle and correct the habit.

3. Practice what you preach. The only way to teach a life of honesty and integrity is to live one in front of your children. They hear every word you say on the phone and to your spouse, and they're as able to spot deception as you are. If your children find you rationalizing how your dishonesty is OK, they'll do the same. So before you say, "Tell them I'm not home," think again.

4. Explain the impact it has on relationships. Honesty is important not just because it's the officially sanctioned right thing to do. God's laws always have our best interest at heart. It's important because good relationships are built on

trust, and trust can't exist without honesty. If you catch your children lying on Monday, how can you trust them on Tuesday? Help them understand the long-term consequences of dishonesty by letting them suffer some of those consequences now.

5. Stop them when you see it coming. You know those situations where your child will be tempted to play with the facts: when they're explaining their actions or faced with the possibility of being disciplined. Before you even ask for the explanation, remind your child what the standard of honesty is in your home and that they will only create a greater problem by lying now.

6. Don't let the details dictate whether the lack of honesty is important. Parenting is hard work, and sometimes we're tempted to overlook dishonesty in our children if the lie doesn't involve something of obvious importance. But a total commitment to honesty in all things only comes about when there are no small lies. Take the time to correct your child, even when the deception seems immaterial.

What are some ways you teach honesty to your kids? Please share them below.

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