

Lying

For children ages 3 – 5

Lying is common in childhood. Children may stretch or change the truth, make-up stories or simply deny what an adult knows to be true. But this is not really lying. The difference is in the intent. Real lying is when someone says something they know to be false in order to hide the truth.

Why Do Children Lie?

Here are some reasons why children may lie:

Fear. Kids fear disappointing their parents and being punished. They learn if they didn't do something wrong their parents won't get upset and they won't be punished.

Copying. Kids hear adults lying and think it is okay. Adults may tell a "white lie" or offer an excuse for not doing something. But kids do not know the difference between different kinds of lies.

Habit. Lying can simply become a habit if done often enough.

Wishing something were true. Kids simply want something to be true. Saying it out loud helps the child believe it. For example when your child says "I didn't do it" and you know he did.

Should A Lie Be Punished?

There is no easy answer to this question. You as a parent may say you are punishing your child for lying. But your child may think the punishment is not for the lie itself, but for being found out. If your child is lying because of fear of being punished, punishing your child may increase the likelihood of your child lying in the future!

When Lying Becomes Serious

For Older Children

Sometimes lying is a sign that something else is wrong. Children who lie all the time may also be having trouble with:

- Stealing and cheating
- Anger
- Skipping school
- Making friends and other social situations

Talk to your child's doctor about these concerns.

What Can Parents Do?

Try to find out the reason for the lie. This will help you know what to do about it.

Help your child understand what really happened. Wishing or saying something didn't happen won't change the fact that it did. Try saying "Even though you say you didn't track mud through the house, look, there's the mud and your shoes are dirty."

Be kind when your child makes little mistakes. Help your child see what went wrong, but let your child know that it is safe to tell the truth. Reassure your child that you won't get mad when you hear what really happened.

If your child did something wrong, help fix the problem. If your child tracked mud through the house, clean it up together. Your child will learn that mud really did get all over the floor.

Praise your child for telling the truth. Help your child understand that what he did may have been wrong, but that telling the truth about it was good. If your child admits to tracking mud through the house, say "Thank you for telling me the truth. But you did get the floor muddy and you'll need to help me clean it up."

Mealtime Madness

For children ages 1-5



Kids may eat a lot one day and almost nothing the next. They may want to eat the same food meal after meal. Relax, this is normal. Eating is one area where kids feel they have some control. But it can result in a power struggle with parents.

Children Are Not Adults

Adults have strong food beliefs and preferences. It is not surprising that kids do too. But kids are not adults and should not be treated like adults.

Do not expect your child to behave like an adult at the table. Kids love to eat with their hands and “play” with their food. This is fine as long as your child continues to eat. Remove your child from the table if your child repeatedly throws or spits food. Have your child help clean up the mess.

Just as not all foods appeal to all adults, not all foods appeal to all children. Trying to make a child eat something they do not like usually ends in frustration and tears. Getting mad at your child does not help.

Children learn eating habits from you. If you snack on junk food, eat while watching TV, and do not eat your vegetables, your child will want to do the same.

Helpful Hints

- **Handwashing:** You and your child should both wash your hands before and after every meal.
- **Using child-sized cups, forks and spoons and cutting food into small, bite-sized pieces will make it easier for your child to eat without help.**

What Can Parents Do?

Parents should decide what and when the family eats, but the child should decide how much to eat, or whether to eat at all. Do not worry if your child skips a meal. Kids usually make up for it at the next meal or snack.

Meals Made Easy

Buy and serve only healthy foods. Having a house full of junk food is too much temptation for a child. Stock your house with fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Then let your child choose which of these foods to eat. Ask your child, “Do you want peas or corn?” Serve only one meal for the whole family. Your child can choose not to like it, or not to eat it, but do not fix different food. Don’t make your child “clean his plate.” Serve small amounts of food and have your child ask for more. Forcing a child to clean his plate will teach overeating. Serve new foods as “extras.” Offer new foods along with familiar foods. If your child won’t eat the new food, keep trying. It may take a while before your child is ready.

A Word About Sweets

Sweets and desserts should be saved for special occasions, like birthdays and holidays. They should not be eaten every day or used as rewards. If you do want to reward your child for eating vegetables, make the reward a non-food item, such as a trip to the park.

For more information on this topic call your doctor or your health plan’s member services department.



Misbehavior and Discipline

For children ages 1 - 5

If your child hits, bites or acts out in other ways, you're not alone. This behavior is common in young children and can be caused by many things. Most kids act this way for only a short time until they learn better ways of showing how they feel.

Why Do Children Misbehave?

There is no one answer to this question.

- **Exploration.** Young children learn about their world by using their senses. A young child may not know the difference between chewing on a toy or biting a finger.
- **Teething.** Very young children may feel their teeth coming in. Chewing and biting feels good!
- **They are testing you.** Kids may bite or hit just to see what happens or to shock you.
- **Attention.** Kids will do anything (“good” or “bad”, to get your attention.
- **Copying.** Kids love to do what others do. Never hit or bite a child back as this teaches them it's okay.
- **Independence.** Acting out often gets the child what is wanted without asking for help.
- **Frustration.** Young kids do not have the words to say how they feel. They may show you by hitting, biting and kicking.
- **Stress.** Small or large changes (like losing a toy or starting a new school) can be very stressful for your child.

What Can Parents Do?

Find out why your child hits, bites or acts out. Ask the 5 W's—Who, What, Why, Where, and When. There may be a pattern to your child's behavior. If so, look for clues that your child is about to hit or bite and try to prevent it.

Ways to Prevent Biting/Hitting

Have a routine. Routines are comforting to children and can reduce stress in times of change.

Do not let your child get too hungry or tired. Serve small, frequent meals at the same time each day. Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.

Have a safe play area. Put things you do not want your child to touch or grab out of sight. This will stop you from having to say “No” and take things away from your child.

Make sure there are plenty of toys during play time. This will help avoid fighting. Young ones do not know how to share.

Spend time with your child when he is not acting up. This teaches your child that behaving poorly isn't needed to get your attention.

Ways to Stop Biting/Hitting

- Acknowledge your child's feelings. Tell your child it is okay to be mad, angry or scared.
- Teach your child how to show his feelings. Ask your child to use words instead of biting or hitting.
- Tell your child it's okay to bite a stuffed toy or hit a ball with a bat, but it's not okay to bite or hit another person.
- Teach your child to say “Sorry” and comfort the person who's hurt.
- Children age 2 and over can be given a “time-out”. Take the child to a quiet place to calm down. A good rule is one minute for each year of life. Example: a 3 year old should have a 3 minute time-out.

A Word About Spanking

Spanking is a way to get your child's attention. But it doesn't teach the right way to behave or how to solve problems. It may teach that it's okay to hit. Be a good role model. Praise your child for behaving well.

For more information on this topic call your doctor or your health plan's member services department.

Building Self-Esteem

From birth to 3 years old

Self-esteem is having respect and pride in oneself. Your child begins to develop these feelings in infancy.

Help Build Your Child's Self-Esteem

Many things affect self esteem. You can help your child have good self esteem by forming a strong, close bond with him.

Respond To Your Baby's Needs

Responding to your baby's needs helps build a sense of trust and security.

- Pick up your newborn when he cries. You are showing your love. This will not spoil your baby.
- Your baby is sensitive to how you respond to his needs. Your tone of voice and look on your face will let your baby know if you enjoy spending time with him.
- Spend time holding, talking, singing, soothing and playing with your baby.

Help Your Child Learn New Skills

As your child grows, he will do more and more on his own. Your child is building self-confidence.

- Have a safe place where your child can discover new things.
- Help your child learn new skills. Ask your child to help you with daily tasks.
- Be specific when you praise your child. For example, tell your child you really like it when he picks up his toys.

Let Your Child Know You Love And Accept Him

- Spend time alone with your child. Show interest in what your child says and does.
- Take your child's feelings seriously.
- Show your love with words and hugs.
- Let your child know it is okay to make mistakes.

Help Your Child Cope With Being Away From You

Your child will fear being away from you. This fear is called separation anxiety. Do not worry. This is a sign of the close bond you share. It usually begins around 7 months and peaks between 10 and 18 months. Help your child learn that you will return:

- Play peek-a-boo with your baby. This helps your baby learn that things come back after they've disappeared.
- Have your baby stay in a room alone for a little while. Make sure the room is safe. For example, do not follow when your baby crawls into another room. Wait a few minutes before going in.
- Always tell your child when you are leaving, why you are leaving and when you will be back. Be sure to return when you say you will. Do not linger after you say goodbye.



- Although your child can not tell time, say when you will return. For example, say you will be back after lunch.
- Show that you understand your child's feelings. Say, "I know you don't like it when I leave. I must go to the store but I will come back."
- Give your child a comfort item like a favorite toy.
- Spend time with your baby and the babysitter. It will be easier for your baby to get used to a new person if you are there.

- Try not to leave when your child is sick, sleepy or hungry.

Sleeping

From birth to 5 years old

Children need plenty of sleep to grow and be healthy. Having a bed time routine will help your child learn when it is time to sleep. Having a bed time routine means doing the same things, in the same order, each night. A bed time routine might start with a bath, follow with a story, and then bed. It is also helpful to keep the same bed time each night.

Birth to 1 Year Old

Young babies do not know the difference between day and night. To help create good sleeping habits, keep nighttime feedings and diaper changes quiet. Keep the lights low. *Save play for the daytime.*

Your baby will need nighttime feedings for the first 3 or 4 months, and will sleep often during the day. Most babies learn to sleep through the night (about 6 hours) by 4 to 6 months of age. When your baby starts to sleep through the night, morning and afternoon naps are still common.

It is best for your baby to learn how to fall asleep on his own. Learning to fall asleep on his own helps your child fall back asleep on his own when he wakes up in the middle of the night.

If your baby cries, check in every 5 to 10 minutes to offer comfort, then leave. If crying continues, make sure your baby is not crying for a reason. Your child might be hungry, sick, or need a diaper change.

Be Safe

If your child sleeps in a crib, make sure it is safe.

- The slats should be no more than 2-3/8 inches apart.
- The end panels should be solid, without decorative cutouts.
- Make sure there is no cracked or peeling paint.
- Corner posts should not be higher than the end panels.
- The drop sides should have a locking, hand-operated latch. It should not release by accident.
- The mattress should be the same size as the crib. If you can fit 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib, the crib should not be used.



SIDS

Sometimes a baby dies while sleeping for no clear reason. This is called **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**. This is rare, but you can help to keep your baby safe.

To help prevent SIDS:

- Place your baby on the back to sleep.
- Use a firm baby mattress.
- Breastfeed.
- Do not use blankets, toys, bumpers or pillows in the crib.
- Do not allow smoke around your baby.
- Do not allow your baby to get too warm.

Ages 2 to 5

At ages 2 and 3 your child may sleep from 9 to 13 hours a day. Some young children take one or two naps during the day. Other children stop napping. Kids 3 to 5 years old need 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night.

Preparing for bed

Do calm activities before bedtime, like reading a book. Say your goodnights and let your child fall asleep on his own.

If your child doesn't want to go to bed:

- Let your child make as many choices as possible at bedtime. For example, which pajamas to wear or what story to read.
- Leave a night-light on.
- Offer a stuffed animal or special blanket.

If your child cries after you leave, wait 10 minutes. Then go and tell your child that everything is okay and it's time to go to sleep. Don't scold. And don't reward

this behavior by feeding or staying with your child. If the crying continues, repeat this process.

If your child comes looking for you:

- Take your child back to bed right away.
- Say it's time to go to sleep.
- Leave as soon as your child is lying down again.
- Do this every time.

Source: *American Academy of Pediatrics*

Temper Tantrums

For children ages 1-3



When a child whines, cries, screams, kicks and hits it's called a temper tantrum.

Temper tantrums *are normal* and can happen when the child:

- wants attention
- is hungry, uncomfortable or tired
- is frustrated or angry
- cannot get what he or she wants

Toddlers do not have the same control over their emotions as adults and they may not have the words to tell you how they feel. Crying and screaming may be the only way your child has of showing his feelings.

Stop A Tantrum Before It Starts

You will not be able to stop all tantrums from happening. But you can take steps so that tantrums happen less often. First, watch your child and look for clues that a tantrum is on the way. Then take steps to stop a tantrum before it starts:

- Keep to a routine by having meals and bedtime at the same time each day.
- Give your child choices. "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt?" This will give your child a sense of control. Do not ask things like "Do you want to take a bath?" unless it's okay if the answer is "No."
- Let your child know what's about to happen. Say, "After lunch we'll read a story and then it's time for a nap." This will help your child get ready.
- Give attention when your child is behaving well. This will stop your child acting up just to get noticed.
- Distract your child. If one toy breaks, tell your child it's okay to be sad. Try and offer a new toy or move your child to a new room or outside.
- Know what your child can and cannot do. Give tasks and toys that are right for your child's age. This will help prevent frustration.



What To Do During A Tantrum

The first thing is to make sure your child is safe. You may need to hold your child firmly to prevent your child or someone else from getting hurt. Tell your child why you are doing this.

Be a good role model. Keep calm. Do not yell, shake or hit your child. This hurts your child and teaches it's okay to act this way.

Distract your child by offering something else to play with.

Ignore your child's tantrum if you can. Turn your back or do something else (but don't leave your child alone). Paying attention to your child increases the chances of a temper tantrum in the future.

What To Do After A Tantrum

- Do not give your child what is wanted during or after a tantrum. This makes kicking and screaming more likely the next time. Tell your child how much you liked his being able to calm down.
- Your child probably doesn't know what caused this behavior and may be scared. Show your child that you still love him.

For more information on this topic call your doctor or your health plan's member services department.

Toilet Training

For children ages 1 1/2 - 3

There is no set age at which you should start teaching your child how to use the toilet. The key is to choose the right time for your child. Most kids start to show signs of being ready around 2 years of age. By 3 or 4 most kids have control during the day. Staying dry at night may take a little longer.

Getting Started

- **Relax.** A calm approach works best. Good toilet training takes time and lots of love.
- **Show your child what to do in the bathroom.** Your child will learn by watching. Children should be shown what to do in the bathroom by a person of the same sex.
- **Choose words to use** for body parts, urine (pee) and bowel movements (BMs). Avoid words like “dirty” and “stinky” as they might embarrass your child.
- **Use a potty chair.** Small children can get on a potty chair more easily and their feet will touch the floor.
- **Help your child know** when it’s time to use the bathroom. Your child may grunt, squat, turn red in the face, or stop playing. Tell your child these are signs that it’s time to go to the toilet.
- **Make trips to the toilet** at the same time each day:
 - As soon as your child gets up in the morning
 - Before and after naps



Ready or Not?

Wait until your child is ready to learn to use the toilet. Starting too soon may cause tears and feelings of failure. Delay toilet training if there is a lot going on in the house. For example, do not teach toilet training right after bringing home a new baby or if your child is at the height of the “terrible twos.” When your child is truly ready it will be much easier.

Your child is ready when he or she:

- Can follow simple directions
- Stays dry for at least 2 hours at a time and during naps
- Pulls up/down pants
- Tells you about a soiled or wet diaper
- Has bowel movements (BMs) at the same time each day

Helpful Hints

Read “potty” books to your child. This will help your child know that other kids are doing the same thing.

Get your child training pants and easy to remove clothing.

Be there for your child. Your child will need help with clothing, wiping and flushing.

Praise your child when successful. Tell your child it’s okay to try again later if needed.

Treat accidents and near misses calmly. It takes time to learn this new skill.

Clean your child carefully. Girls need to be wiped from front to back to avoid infection.

Teach your child the importance of hand washing with soap and water after using the toilet.

Bedwetting

Bedwetting is common in young kids. Learning control at night comes later than during the day.

It may help to wake your child once during the night to go to the bathroom. A good time to do this is right before you go to bed.

For more information on this topic call your doctor or your health plan’s member services department.

Child Care for young children

One of the most challenging tasks parents face is finding good child care. Start looking for child care as soon as you can. Finding the right child care can take some time.

Types of Childcare

There are four main types of child care: friends or family, in-home care givers, family child care homes and center-based programs. They can be licensed or unlicensed.

Unlicensed

- **Friends or Family**—Parents may choose relatives, friends or neighbors to care for their child. This type of care can take place in the caregiver's home or in the child's home.
- **In-Home Caregivers**—In-Home Caregivers provide care for children in the child's home. They include live-in or live-out nannies and housekeepers. These caregivers do not have a license and are not checked by the state.

Licensed Child Care

- **Family Child Care Homes**—A Family Child Care Home is in the caregiver's home. It is a small group setting for your child. Homes can sometimes provide more hours.
- **Center-Based Programs**—A Child Care Center or "day care" is usually in a building. The number and ages of children at each center varies, as do the hours. They are checked by the state.



Five Steps to Choosing Quality Child Care

No matter what kind of child care is best for your family, there are some steps you should take before making a final decision.

1. Look

Trust your first impression. Are the children watched at all times? Are the adults warm, friendly, cheerful?

2. Check

- Is the home or center licensed?
- Is the environment safe, clean and pleasant?
- Do they have first aid kits?
- Is the staff CPR/first aid trained?
- Are the kitchens and bathrooms clean?
- Are emergency numbers posted?

3. Count

Count the number of children each adult is watching. The smaller the group, the better.

4. Ask

What is the training and experience of the staff? What is the staff turnover rate? Do staff attend classes and workshops? Will they give you a list of parents you can call? Can you drop in at any time?

5. Be Informed

Start your search by calling your local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency. The CCR&R can give you the facts about child care options in your area. To find your local agency call 1-800-424-2246 or go to www.ChildCareAware.org.

Quality Child Care Makes A Lasting Impact

The first few years of a child's life are key to development. Quality child care plays a big role in teaching language, social and thinking skills that prepare children for school. Studies show that the positive effects of quality child care can last a lifetime.