

# WHY DO KIDS LIE?

## THE TYPES OF LIES KIDS COMMONLY TELL

*Lying is a natural part of child development; the magnitude of the lie(s) your children tell will be dependent on their growth, maturity, positive environment and honest communication with their parents that create the value of truthfulness.*

### AVOIDANCE

*Kids lie to get out of doing something they don't want to do. Avoidance tactics may include trying to get out of doing homework, chores, walking the dog, picking up their room or helping out. They may be also trying to avoid doing something that is beyond their capabilities, such as a homework assignment they don't understand.*

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### MINOR MISTAKES SPUR BIG REACTIONS

*Consider your reaction; how do you react? Do you yell, get angry, are frustrated or mad? Do you react rationally or irrationally? The next time a slip-up happens and your child doesn't admit to their mistake, check your emotions. Are your kids trying to hide the truth from you because they're afraid of how you'll react?*

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### FEAR OF DISAPPOINTING YOU

*Lies that children tell may be to avoid getting in trouble with Mom and Dad because they're afraid to disappoint you and the feelings of unworthiness it stirs deep inside. Before you react, take a moment to consider the reasons why they lied and hid the mistake from you.*

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### AVOID PUNISHMENT

*It's not uncommon for kids to lie to avoid strict punishments and consequences at home. If they've had a minor infraction, they just might be lying to you because they're afraid of you yelling, belittling, stern consequences and even physical punishment. What are the consequences in your home like? Do consequences match the misdemeanor or are they too harsh?*

### STRICT HOME ENVIRONMENT

*Kids lie to avoid strict punishments and consequences at home. If they've had a minor infraction, they just might be lying to you because they're afraid of your strong reaction such as yelling, belittling, stern consequences and even physical punishment such as spanking, or worse. What are the consequences in your home like? Do consequences match the infraction or are they too harsh?*

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### SOCIETAL PRESSURES

*Lies can make children feel more accepted with their peers and help them fit in. Stretching the truth and straight out lying is a way to be seen as "cool." It might be time to assess your child's confidence; are they trying too hard to fit in because they are lacking in self-confidence in themselves?*

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### MOM & DAD TELL WHITE LIES

*While we think that "white lies" don't hurt anyone, kids see that their parents skew the truth, get away with it and no one is hurt from them, so you set the precedent that lying is "sometimes" Ok. No type of dishonesty is good and it doesn't promote honesty to your children. When parents are dishonest, children will be dishonest as well.*

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### MENTAL ILLNESS

*Lying can also be an early indication of the beginning of mental illness. Pathological lying is associated with other symptoms, and kids who lie as a reflex (versus manipulation) whether they see a practical need to or not (age-based) may require further medical evaluation.*