

Helping Your Child Learn Honesty

Your child is working very hard to learn the differences between fact and fiction, yours and mine, fair and unfair. He is just beginning to learn to see things from another person's point of view. It is helpful if you view behaviors such as lying, stealing, and cheating as mistakes made along the bumpy road to social learning.

Your child may think that the only reason for telling the truth is that you will get mad if he doesn't. Responding with scolding and punishment teaches your child that you disapprove of dishonesty, but not **why** it's important to be honest.

How can I teach my child honesty?

- Explain to him that you need to trust him, just like he needs to trust you. Families work best that way.
- Don't ask him if he did something wrong when you know he did. Asking gives your child more chances to lie.
- Make sure the adults in your family keep promises, tell the truth, and play fair. Your child will be confused if it's OK to lie about his age to get into a movie cheaper, but not about eating the last cookie.

What if my child takes things that aren't his?

- Help your child return the object to the owner. Talk to him about other ways to make up for his behavior.
- Teach your child how to ask for what he wants. Explain the concepts of borrowing and returning items.

What should I do about cheating?

- Teach and model the meaning of fairness.
- Explain that others won't want to play with him when he cheats. Stop playing the game if your child starts to cheat.
- Look for ways to keep games from being too competitive. Don't emphasize winning and losing, but more the joy of playing the game together.

Parents,

This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org

