

# INNOCENT LITTLE LIARS

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Your cute innocent little children have deceived you. They are not who they appear to be! If you haven't already caught them in a lie, chances are you will. And more than once—as toddlers, as young children, and as teenagers.

At first you might want to try to suppress laughter as you watch them unknowingly betray themselves.

- They'll tell you they didn't eat the chocolate cake that is smeared all over their face.
- They'll try to persuade you they brushed their teeth, but not let you smell their breath.
- They'll say they found that trinket in the parking lot, even though you saw them eyeing it in the store.

Eventually petty lies turn into big whoppers and you may one day be heartbroken to realize your teenager is living a double life.

But lying is a common childhood offense, much more so than you might guess, and they start testing their skills at a very young age.

One study found that some four-year-olds lied once every two hours and some six-year-olds lied once every 90 minutes. The study also found that 96% of all kids lie. (I bet the other 4% were lying about it.) Lying is actually a sign of cognitive development. In another survey, 80% of high school students admitted to lying to their parents about something “significant” in the past year.

Once they learn to lie, does it even make logical sense for our children to tell the truth when it might . . . cost them something they really want, affect their grade, make them seem boring, or get them punished?

Kids will inevitably want to choose the easier route and lie their way to safety, just as we are often tempted to do. They will lie to get what they want, but they keep lying because they want to stay in our good graces, and to avoid punishment.

Mostly they lie to protect their relationships. If only they could understand that the lie itself is even more devastating to the very relationship they were trying to protect. (If only we understood that too!)

Here's the bottom line: Your child lies to you. All the time. Don't let their innocence fool you. They're still trying to figure things out. They make stupid mistakes, and you should expect them to tell crazy lies too.

But dishonesty should not be ignored. It's our job as parents to show our kids how to value honesty, grow in integrity, and be trustworthy even when they make mistakes.

Most parents would agree that honesty is a trait they want most for their children. But how does that actually play out in our own home?

Do we focus more on the crime that caused our child to lie or the lie?

Do we create a safe place for them to tell the truth?

Do we keep our own word?

We have to be intentional about teaching our children to choose to be HONEST even when it's hard. Not only will it keep them out of bigger trouble, but it will affect every one of their relationships and their overall quality of life.

***How do you react to your kids when you catch them in a lie?***