

August 30-31, 2008



Parenting Tips

Language Without Logic

Many young children confuse fantasy with truth. They have a hard time knowing the difference between their ideas and the facts. Reality and thoughts get confused, and logic has nothing to do with the equation. In their creativity and immaturity, these kids sometimes tell stories that aren't true.

Sometimes preschoolers, for instance, tell stories as truth because they wish the story were true. Or a child who tries to tell a story without having all the facts may make up the details she doesn't understand or remember. Her brain has a hard time recognizing the difference between what actually happened and what details she is filling in.

In these instances, the child doesn't intend to deceive, but it's important to teach children the difference between what is true and what is not. Four-year-old Jenny tells her cousin that she has a friendly lion living in her basement. As Mom hears Jenny telling the story, she can gently say, "Jenny, I think you need to start your story, 'I wish I had a friendly lion in my basement, and here's what it would be like.'"

When Sammy, age five, starts telling the fictitious story about how he lived on a sailboat all summer, Dad might help his son start the story, "Wouldn't it be fun if I lived the whole summer on a sailboat?" These children don't necessarily need a rebuke for lying, but they do need guidance in their creativity to learn how to properly guard the truth as they speak creatively.

Young children need consistent and patient training. Listen carefully to what your kids say to distinguish lying from immaturity. When it is lying, use correction. When it's fantasy, teach children how to talk without the appearance of dishonesty. Training in this area will go a long way to help children grow into a lifestyle of telling the truth.

This tip comes from the chapter on honesty in the book [Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids](#) by Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.