

Should I be concerned when my child lies?

Lying is a part of each child's development and is not initially cause for alarm. Young children typically tell tall tales and begin to fib as they generally have a rich fantasy life and are unable to comprehend the difference between right and wrong. Parents are bestowed with the task of teaching this societal value and should use these opportunities to begin educating their children about the importance of honesty and the difference between reality and imaginary life. By the time that children are school age, they should have a better grasp on this concept, although at times they will continue to lie to avoid punishment or to gain attention from others. This type of lying is not unlikely in adolescent children as well as some use it as a way to cope with not meeting the expectations of their parents, teachers, and coaches. Parents should pay close attention to adolescents who lie as this may be an attempt to cover up a more serious problem.

Parents are encouraged to discuss isolated instances of lying with their children emphasizing future expectations. Caretakers should be concerned when the lying becomes repetitive and appears malicious. In these cases, parents are encouraged to seek the aid of a professional in an attempt to understand the reasons behind the behavior and whether the child requires further intervention. Throughout their development, children will model the behavior of the adults that care for them. Parents should set an example of appropriate behavior in the hopes that their children will follow in their footsteps.