



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 3 to 4

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Honesty**

Honest people consistently hold themselves to a high standard of truthfulness. They communicate in an open, upfront way; they do not lie, steal, cheat, or manipulate information to conceal it from others. However, an honest person may occasionally tell a "white lie" to protect another's feelings.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Have your children understand that you will love them even if they do something bad, and that you value telling the truth above all.

A preschooler's lies tend to be expressions of deep wishes or a lack of clarity on the difference between fantasy and reality. Statements such as "I color better than anyone else in my class," and "I've been on an airplane 25 times" convey sentiments that children badly want to be real.

Blatant lying to escape blame ("I didn't spill the milk") is an outgrowth of typical preschool-age thinking that "you are what you do." The child doesn't want to think of herself as bad, so he or she denies having done a bad thing. But by this age, children know lying is wrong. Parents can help defuse a child's fear of being honest and clarify why it's so important to always tell the truth.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Teach a child to take responsibility for his or her actions by saying,** "Maybe you did it by accident, but I need you to help clean it up."
- ✓ **Play a game in which you say some things that are true and other things that are false,** and your child has to identify whether a statement is true or "a fib." Exaggerate some things, like "The sky is green.... Is that true?" to encourage your child to recognize the difference between truth and falsehood.
- ✓ **Tell the story of the "boy who cried wolf,"** and be sure to ask your child what would have happened if the boy had told the truth from the beginning.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @ responsibilityproject.com/familyvalues