



the family values toolkit

For Children Birth to Age 2

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:

Start to teach your child the basic difference between truth and falsehood.

Babies are the most honest of human beings, communicating their needs, wants, and emotions directly through crying, laughing, or cooing. By age two, however, toddlers may naturally turn to oppositional statements, like "Not sleepy!" or "Not wet!" (though clearly the opposite is true). These aren't lies *per se*, but ways for kids to control their world and assert their will. For parents, this is a great time to start defining what's true and what's false.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **If your child gives you an oppositional statement** like "Not sleepy!" say, "I know you want to stay up and play, but I can see that you are sleepy."
- ✓ **Help your child verbalize her wishes.** For instance, if she says "I'm hungry" but you just fed her, don't deny her honest expression of feeling by saying "No, you're not." You could say, "You feel hungry now. But you just had lunch, so let's wait a while to have a snack."
- ✓ **As you begin to teach your child the difference between right and wrong,** make sure to include "telling a fib" as a wrong behavior. For instance, explain patiently to your child that saying, "The milk spilled itself, Mommy," is a fib, and fibs are wrong.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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