



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 5 to 7

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:

Reinforce your child's external sense of honesty, even if the internal sense is not yet developed.

Children this age typically do not have an internal sense of honesty. They generally tell the truth because their parents say lying is wrong. At this age, children exaggerate to feel superior ("My father makes more money than yours") or to avoid punishment. On the playing field, kids may unfairly add points to their game or falsely protest, "That ball crossed the line--it's out of bounds!"--signs that they're not developmentally ready to handle losing. Parents, you can help ease the discomfort of telling the truth and reinforce the importance of honesty in your family in several vital ways. For example, model honesty in your own actions. Freely admit when you make mistakes like forgetting to keep an appointment, or return incorrect change if you've been given too much. Here are some other great suggestions.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Set up an "honor code" at home.** Choose certain chores, such as putting away toys or emptying a wastebasket, you will trust your children to do on their own. Make sure your kids understand that when you ask, "Have you done your chores today?" you'll believe them if they say "no"--but that there'll be consequences if they aren't telling the truth.
- ✓ **Play "Family Fairy Tales: real or make believe?"** *Materials: Notebook, pens, markers or crayons.* Next time your kids start telling tall tales, show your kids the notebook, and explain that it's the "Family Fairy Tale Book." Have them help you write up some of their fabrications as if they were fairy tales. Let them add fanciful illustrations. Then keep the notebook on hand for the next time your kids get carried away with a lie. It's a gentle way to point out that you notice when they're stretching the truth.
- ✓ **Thank your child when he or she tells the truth about something that was difficult to tell you,** like, "I broke a dish," or "I failed my math test."

Then, Report Back!

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