

Kids often lie, especially to their parents, begin it at different ages for different reasons. Preschoolers lie because they don't have a good grasp of what truth means. So, they mean by saying something that makes it true. **Preschoolers believe that saying something can make it true.** So, when the three-year-old says she didn't kick her sister, she really believes that... We can help children at that age by focusing on what their imagination questions and what a fact questions and practicing the difference. **Help 3-5 year olds by practicing fact vs imagination.**

Once kids get to be five to seven years old they do understand that saying something doesn't make it true. So, from elementary school (and) on we help kids if we give them a consequence of making a mistake but a much more serious consequence if they choose to lie about. **Kids 5+ need stronger consequences for lying than for mistakes.** This reinforces for them their understanding that making mistakes happens, but lying breaks trust and is hurtful and often dangerous.

A good example of this is as one of our sons was at his friend's house and he broke a window. He had to apologize to the parents and start saving up for a replacement but because he chose to lie to his friend's parents about breaking the window he also wasn't allowed to go to his friend's house for several weeks afterwards because they couldn't trust him.

**Tweens and teens want to avoid trouble or disappointing us.** When tweens and teens lie they often do it because they want to avoid getting in trouble or they don't want us to think badly of them as their friends. When we call them on it they'll try often to turn it into an argument about privacy or us not trusting them. **Tweens and teens can earn our trust by choosing the truth consistently.** As parents it's our obligation to help them understand that privacy is earned and if they want us to trust them they have to prove it by telling the truth even when it's hard.

The last part of helping our kids understand that trust is one of the most important parts of our family is that we can't lie to our kids. **Adults need to tell the truth.** We can't absolutely tell them that something isn't their business and we are not ready to discuss it with them. But if we lie to our kids we confuse younger kids and we give older kids and teens an excuse for their own lies. So, each of these things really helps to build a culture of trust in our family.