

Stealing and lying

If you have found out that your child has stolen or has lied, you may be feeling really let down by them and their actions. You may be feeling as though you have been deceived by them and hurt that they could do something like this.

Why do children steal?

Children steal for a variety of reasons and each incident is different and is motivated by individual reasons. A child may have stolen from a shop, school, of their friends, family members, etc. Whatever they have stolen, it is important to point out the severity of their actions and the possible consequences. Let them know that they could gain a negative reputation and others will have no trust in them. It is also important to point out that they may have also broken the law by stealing and that alone has severe consequences.

Your child may have stolen something to impress their friends and feel like they fit in amongst their peers. They might have stolen as they want to buy something they are not allowed to have normally. They may have stolen for attention as sometimes even negative attention can seem better than none at all. If you notice something missing, they have gained attention, whether they own up to it or lie. If this is a cry for help, you may need to help them explore their emotional health.

Teach them the value of money. Explain that money can be earned, and encourage children to do chores in return for pocket money. Make them understand how important it is to budget and save, and that if they steal from you, they may have to go without other things to make up for it.

Talk about other people's feelings. Try to make them understand how bad it makes people feel to be stolen from. Ask them to put themselves in that position and think about how they would feel if something they loved, like their favourite toy, was taken.

Why do children lie?

Teaching your child the importance of honesty should start as early as possible so they do not feel inclined to make up lies or be dishonest. Lying is something that should be discouraged from an early age so they grow up and understand the concept of what is the right thing to do and what isn't.

If your child has lied, it is important to approach this situation calmly so you are able to get your child to see that this action was a negative. Find out why they lied first of all as they may have lied as they were frightened of a reaction.

Make your boundaries clear. You expect the truth from them, even if it's not what they want you to hear. Lying will only make a bad situation worse in the long-run. If they lied to impress friends, let them know how humiliating it would be if they were to find out the truth. This may help them stop and think about

this. Lying for attention is very common amongst children, especially if they feel they are missing out on something.

You may want to share examples of your childhood or talk about fables such as cry wolf so they are able to relate to the consequences of lying or stealing and getting caught.