

Reasons Children Lie

- **Fear:** To escape the overly severe consequences of behavior.
- **Avoidance:** To stay out of or get out of trouble.
- **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy:** To live up to the expectation, often repeated, that he or she is “a born liar.”
- **Developmental:** Truth, fantasy, and exaggeration are not yet distinct (for younger or developmentally delayed children).
- **Denial:** To rid oneself of painful feelings and/or memories.
- **Wish Fulfillment:** To make things better.
- **Fantasy:** Daydreams and imagined events become real for the child.
- **Protection of Others:** To protect others from the truth.
- **Self-Protection:** To protect and distance oneself from (perceived) unreliable, unresponsive, and threatening adults.
- **Recognition/Peer Pressure:** To gain acceptance from peers or to enhance own reputation.
- **Power:** To control or manipulate others, or to get revenge.
- **Negative Attention:** To risk making someone angry rather than not receive any attention at all.
- **Learning/Imitation:** To copy the behavior of others, especially important adults and peers.
- **Excitement:** To make oneself more interesting by sensationalizing or exaggerating the truth.
- **Testing Limits:** To see what’s possible to get away with.
- **Lack of Information:** To fill gaps in knowledge with “made up” information.