

Responding to Stealing

When the child steals, ask yourself these questions:

- Is the child scared?
- Is the child angry?
- Is the child excited/happy?
- What is the child's immediate reason for stealing?
- What other motivation might exist for the child to steal?
- What situations, if any, predictably lead to this behavior?
- How do I feel when this happens?
- Do my feelings/reactions provide a clue to why the child feels or behaves this way?
- Do I need to gather more information about the situation before taking action?

Methods for responding to stealing

Focus on your relationship with the child/youth:

- Remind the child/youth that you care about him/her.
- Ask the child/youth if he/she feels cared for by you.
- Ask the child/youth for positive examples of how you care for him/her.
- Ask the child/youth what he or she thinks your responsibilities are as a parent with respect to the child's well-being. Make sure it includes care, safety, good relationships with others, satisfied needs, and skill development.
- Invite the child/youth to evaluate your relationship: Is it good? Supportive? Unfulfilling? Other?