


## TREND

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# Can the little lies of parents affect the emotional well-being of children?

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*Can the little lies of parents affect the emotional well-being of children? - © fizkes - Getty Images / iStockphoto*

### RTBF TREND with AFP

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A study conducted by the University of Singapore suggests that parents' lies can affect the minds of their children, including in adulthood.

The **relatives lie** inevitably a little to their **children** . By spite, by omission or sometimes for the " *good* " of their offspring. But be careful to **limit your lies** and try as much as possible to provide an **honest argument** to your heads when you refuse to access any of their requests, warn researchers at the National University of Singapore.

Together with the Universities of Toronto (Canada), San Diego (USA) and Zhejiang (China), they conducted a study published in The Journal of Experimental Child Psychology (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S002209651830540X?via%3Dihub>) . For this research, 379 young adults (average age 21) were asked to complete 4 questionnaires.

The first was to indicate the **frequency** with which they felt that their parents were lying to them as children. For example: " *If you do not come with me now, I'll leave you here alone* ". Or again: " *I did not take my wallet on me, we will come back another day* ".

The second questionnaire was devoted to the participants' **own lies** , this time formulated at the address of their parents. Finally, the last two dealt with the prosocial behavior of volunteers and their tendency to behave selfishly and impulsively.

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*Looking at the responses, adults whose parents seemed to lie to them frequently are more likely to engage in intrusive or manipulative behavior.* ”

" *Asserting authority over children is a **form of psychological intrusion** that can undermine children's sense of autonomy and rejection, which ultimately undermines their **emotional well-being** ." Parents should be aware of these potential **implications** and consider **alternatives** to lying, "suggests Peipei Setoh, assistant professor at the School of Social Science at the National University of Singapore (NTU) and lead author of the study.*

While this theory is interesting, it has limitations, starting with the fact that the answers were obtained from participants' self-assessments and, in addition, based on memories from their childhood.

The authors of the study also pointed out that it would be wise to involve parents in future research on the subject in order to distinguish " *harmless* " lies from those that could harm the psychological well-being of their children.