

PARENTING

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Parents' lies to kids can make them liars in their adulthood, study says

Researchers concluded that parenting by lying could put children at a greater risk of developing problems like aggression, rule-breaking and intrusive behaviours.



Parenting by lying can promote dishonesty in kids, according to a study.

You may think those simple lies you sometimes tell kids will keep them under control. Turns out, these lies can continue to affect children even when they grow up.

A study published in the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology found that such lies can have a detrimental effect on children when they grow up and who are more likely to lie in their adulthood.

Children who are lied to also face difficulty in meeting psychological and social challenges in future, according to the study, including disruptiveness, conduct problems, experience of guilt and shame, as well as selfish and manipulative character.

“Parenting by lying can seem to save time especially when the real reasons behind why parent want children to do something is complicated to explain,” lead author Setoh Peipei, Nanyang Technological University, was quoted as saying. “When parents tell children that ‘honesty is the best policy’, but display dishonesty by lying, such behaviour can send conflicting messages to their children. Parents’ dishonesty may eventually erode trust and promote dishonesty in children,” the author added.

The lies were found to be related to various things like eating, leaving or staying, children’s misbehaviour or spending money.

Researchers concluded that parenting by lying could put children at a greater risk of developing problems like aggression, rule-breaking and intrusive behaviours.

“It is possible that a lie to assert the parents’ power, such as saying, ‘If you don’t behave, we will throw you into the ocean to feed the fish’, may be more related to children’s adjustment difficulties as adults, compared to lies that target children’s compliance, e.g. ‘there is no more candy in the house’,” the author said.