

Tall tales

Yvette:

My 6-year-old first-grade daughter is constantly untruthful when asked simple questions. I have explained to her how important it is to tell the truth. She acts like she understands yet still continues to lie. What can I do?

S.B.

S.B.:

This is not uncommon behavior for 6-year-olds. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, young children frequently make up stories and tell tales. Children at this age enjoy engaging in fantasy. However, it is important to continue to stress the importance of telling the truth. As the parent, you are your child's best role model, so when she lies, the Academy suggests trying the following:

- Explain the difference between make believe and reality, lying and telling the truth.
- Discuss the importance of honesty at home and in the community.
- Offer alternatives to lying.

This likely is just a phase. I would not be overly concerned. Continue to address the behavior but know that eventually it will pass. However, if she continues to lie as she grows older, and the lying is persistent and repetitive, you should consult her pediatrician.

Yvette

Yvette:

I'm currently teaching a parenting-education class and had the following question from several parents: "What can I do with a very persistent child? The child will not take no for an answer." I would appreciate your advice on this topic. Any information would be appreciated.

Cindy

Cindy:

Persistent children need persistent parents. Persistent children often wear their parents down until they eventually give in. The important thing for parents to understand is that this is a power struggle that will not become easier as children age.

So when parents say no and the children object, the parents must stick to their decision. If children see that

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their parents will give in, it reinforces the behavior. Parents have to know that this is learned behavior on the child's part.

These children have learned that by being persistent, they will ultimately get their way. When children misbehave because they don't get their way, parents need to use firm, fair and consistent discipline every time.

Children need to know that when they go against what Mom or Dad said, there will be consequences — from time-out to removing privileges — and these consequences will increase each time they misbehave.

Children need to learn at an early age that when Mom and Dad say something, that's the final decision.

Otherwise, the teenage years will be very long.

Yvette

Families are encouraged to send their parenting questions concerning their children's challenging or difficult behavioral issues to Brown at columbusparent@thisweeknews.com or *Columbus Parent Magazine*, 7801 N. Central Dr., Lewis Center, OH 43035.



Yvette McGee Brown is a former Domestic Relations/Juvenile Court Judge. She is currently the president of the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Columbus Children's Hospital.