

Thank you

for participating in our study.

Would you want to be involved in
our other studies with your child?

Would you like to introduce us to
other parents?

Do you have questions or concerns?



Please contact us at:

Phone: 604-822-9078

OR

Email:

ChildStudyLab@gmail.com

Catherine Ann Cameron, PhD
Honorary Professor
Psychology Department
University of British Columbia

More about our studies:

We researchers at the University of British Columbia collaborate with teams of researchers at the University of Toronto; the University of California, San Diego, in the USA; Beijing and Hangzhou Normal Universities in China; and Kyoto University in Japan. For over a decade, we have been studying how children tell lies and the truth, why they tell lies, and what are the optimal methods to promote truth telling in children. Our research findings are important to parents, teachers, social workers and legal professionals. Our research has been featured in parenting magazines, television programs, and books on child development. Our research contributed significantly to the passage of a new law in Canada in 2005. This law makes it easier for children to testify in criminal cases such as child abuse. This research is supported by:



CHILD STUDY LAB



In the Child Study Lab at the University of British Columbia¹, we conduct research with children from age 3-18 years and sometimes we see them with their parents or their teachers.



Join us to unravel the
mystery of children's
TRUTH- & LIE-TELLING!

¹ October 2006 Version 1



Questions and Answers



When do children begin to tell lies?

Lying occurs quite early in development. By 3 years of age children begin to tell lies to conceal their transgressions or white lies to be kind or polite.

If my child lies, is she/he going to become a chronic lie-teller?

All children tell lies. It is part of normal development. Very few children become chronic lie-tellers.

Why do children lie?

Children mostly tell lies to protect themselves. Sometimes, they lie to conform to social rules (e.g., to be polite or kind). Our research shows that children often do not lie for their parents even after being coached to do so.

Are there any cultural and ethnic differences in lying?

Young children all over the world begin to tell lies at about the same age. Younger children in all cultures are motivated to lie for similar reasons i.e., not to get in trouble or to cause trouble. However, older children (around 9-11 years) begin to be influenced by their culture's values about lying in some social situations. For

example, Canadian children are more likely to tell lies to protect their friends. In contrast, Chinese children are more likely to tell lies to protect their team. Canadian children are often pleased to take credit for a good deed. Chinese children are more likely to deny having committed a good deed.

Do children understand the moral and social implications of lying and does this understanding influence their behavior?

Children as young as 3 or 4 years of age begin to understand the negativity of lying to conceal a transgression. They also begin to appreciate the benefit of telling white lies to be polite. With increased age, they also develop a more sophisticated understanding of different kinds of lies told with various motivations (e.g., lying to protect a friend or a group). However, our research shows that children's actual lying behavior is often less guided by their moral sense of propriety than by situational factors.

Can children's lies be easily detected?

Not really. Our research shows that police officers, lawyers, customs

officers, and social workers cannot detect 3-year-olds' lies by looking at their facial expressions. However, when children are less than 7-8 years of age, their untruthful verbal statements tend to be poorly crafted and thus reveal their deception. After 7-8 years, their verbal statements become more sophisticated, and as a result, children's lies become increasingly difficult for adults to detect regardless of professional training or child-care experience.

There is still much to know about children's truths and lies. Your participation will help us answer questions such as:

- ✚ Can parents detect their own children's lies?
- ✚ What is the role of story telling in promoting honesty in children?
- ✚ What other methods will allow us to understand children's lie telling?
- ✚ Will hormone reactions help us understand how stressful lying and telling the truth is?