

Chinuch to Emes

- Truthfulness is one of the foundations of a person's *nefesh*¹.
- Parents must pay special attention to ensure that their children always speak the truth².
- Parents, who themselves are not always careful about the truth³, will never succeed in educating their children to always be truthful⁴.
- Parents should never promise a child something, even in jest⁵, and not deliver⁶.
- Parents should train their children to the supreme importance of always saying the truth by refraining from punishing children for a misdemeanor to which they admit⁷. At times, one should even reward children just for saying the truth⁸.
- The distinction between reality and imagination might not be so clear by young children and therefore they often might speak about events in a seemingly untruthful manner. Such forms of untruth obviously don't warrant any punishment⁹.
- An unhealthy fear of parental overreaction¹⁰ to failure and misdemeanors is sometimes the root cause of children responding to parents untruthfully¹¹.

1. *Shaarei Teshuva (shaar 3 ois 184) "emes hu myesodie hanefesh"*. See *Chazon Ish (Emunah vBetachon 4:13)* "A person who says an untruth once is a sinner, a person who constantly says untruths has developed a flawed essence". See also *Emunah V'betachon (3:30)*.
2. See *Sukkah (46b)*, *Mishnah Torah (Shavuos 12:8)* and *Sfas Tamim (perek 7)*.
3. Inevitably the child will observe the parent not being sensitive to the truth and he will be strongly impacted by it, essentially negating all that he hears regarding the importance of truth.
4. A parent, who does want to take a phone call at home for whatever reason, should instruct his child to tell the caller he is not available; never tell him to untruthfully convey to the caller that he is not home. Similarly, parents should always be truthful regarding the precise age of their children when entering museums, amusement parks, and the like even if it will result in a financial loss.
5. Because the child might not realize it was said jokingly, see *Mishnah Halochos (vol. 9 siman 344)*.
6. See *Sukka 46b*. Such conduct teaches the child that one doesn't need to take their own words seriously.
7. Advice of the *Shelah HaKadosh (shaar hosios ois daled)*; see also *Pele Yoetz (erech sheker)*.
8. *Ibid*.
9. However, depending on the age of the child, you should definitely point out to him that what he is saying is imaginative; see Rav Matisyahu Solomon *Shlita* in "With Hearts Full of Love" (p. 195).
10. Parents should work very hard in creating a healthy atmosphere at home where children are comfortable sharing their mistakes and failures. See *Mayan Bais Hashoaiva (Parshas Vayaishev)*
11. Rav Matisyahu Solomon *Shlita* in "With Hearts Full of Love" (p. 193).

- An outright untruth uttered by a child should never go unpunished¹².
- Parents should not constantly question and grill their children to see if they are really telling the truth, since that conveys to the child that his parents suspect him of being a liar, which can become a self fulfilling prophecy.
- *Torah* topics that are not age appropriate for children should not be taught to them in an untruthful manner¹³, rather they should be presented in a vague fashion¹⁴.
- When reciting a parable or fictional story to children it should always be identified as such¹⁵.



12. See *Igeres HaGra*. *B'mechitzas Rabbeinu* quotes Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky *Shlita* as saying that his father Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky *z"l* rarely utilized corporal punishment in educating his children except when an untruth was spoken.

13. See *Rivivos Efraim* (vol.4 siman 234).

14. An illustration of this is to teach the five *inuyim* of *Yom Kippur* by counting eating and drinking as two, when in truth they are to be counted as one (marital relations is the fifth).

15. Rav Matisyahu Solomon *Shlita* in "With Hearts Full of Love" (p. 195). in the name of the *Steipler Gaon z"l*.