Opportunity Mindset Tips
Transforming Challenges into Possibilities

“My child lies all the time, and won’t stop. I don’t know what to do.”

**CHALLENGE**
How can I help teach my child to tell the truth?

**CHOICE**
You can decide how to think about this moment and how to respond. You can choose to see this challenge as a chance for your child to learn and grow.

**OPPORTUNITY**
Helping children understand why telling the truth is important can build the life skill of Critical Thinking.

**SKILL-BUILDING STRATEGIES**

1. **TAKE YOUR CHILD’S VIEW**
   NOTICE when your child is lying and try to understand why. Do they seem to lie about things they wish were true? Do they seem to be trying to avoid embarrassment? Ask your child how they felt. Were they jealous? Worried about a consequence? Wanting something so badly that it felt like they could make it true? Let them know you hear them. You can say, “I understand. We all feel that way sometimes.”

2. **SHARE REASONS**
   SET LIMITS and explain your reasons. You can say, “Telling the truth is important. People know they can trust us and count on us when we tell the truth.” Explain that part of being a good friend, classmate, or family member means trying to tell the truth, even when it’s hard to do.

3. **PROVIDE CHOICES**
   OFFER your child options within the limits you set. For example, if they spill their drink but deny it, you can say, “Oh well. Maybe you wish that didn’t happen—but it did. Drinks spill sometimes. Would you like to help me clean up, and then we can talk about what happened? Or would you like to try to tell me first and then clean up? When we talk about it, we can try to figure out ways to keep from spilling next time.

4. **PROBLEM-SOLVE TOGETHER**
   INVITE your child to suggest ideas of what to say when telling the truth is hard to do. For example, if your child often lies about winning a game when they lost, you could ask, “What are some things you could say when you lose a game?” Make a list together. Practice with a role-play that includes responding. You can model helpful responses, like “Maybe I will win next time.” In your role-play, make sure to take turns being the “winner,” and remind your child that everyone wins and loses sometimes.

5. **SCAFFOLD**
   BUILD ON progress your child makes. Try to “catch them” telling the truth, and let them know you noticed! Show your child that there is a benefit to telling the truth. For example, if your child admits they broke a plate, you can say, “Good thing you let me know about that! Now we know to clean up the floor so no one gets hurt.” Some situations also have a natural reward for telling the truth. Ask your child to think of times when something good came from telling the truth.

An Opportunity Mindset means choosing to see a challenge as a chance to learn and grow.

**CRITICAL THINKING**
Critical Thinking means searching for knowledge that we can rely on to guide our beliefs, decisions, and actions. For more information visit: www.mindinthemaking.org