

Strict parenting can turn kids into liars

Children Feel Unsafe Telling Truth To Rigid Parents, Says Psychotherapist

Rebecca Flood

Strict parenting can turn children into adept liars as they do not feel safe telling the truth, experts have claimed. Psychotherapist Philippa Perry says a child should not be solely to blame for lying as the parenting style has a big impact on their ability and readiness to fib.

A study by Canadian psychologist Victoria Talwar, using the 'Peeping Game', reinforced the claims. Examining two schools in West Afri-

ca, one with stricter rules and the other with a more laid back approach, researchers asked children to guess what object was making a noise in the game.

According to game, people are asked to identify the objects by sound only, with the last one bearing no correlation to what it looks like.

The researchers then left the room and on return asked the children what the object was, and if they peeked. Talwar found that the number of students from the relaxed



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PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT

school who lied and told the truth was roughly on par with studies from other schools. But those from the strict school were quick to lie, and did it "very effectively".

Author of 'Born Liars - Why We Can't Live Without Lying', Ian Leslie, said with the school cracking down hard on lying, it created a "machine" for churning out very effective deceivers.

Perry said, "If a child lies to get out of trouble then that lie is not all down to the child. It's a co-created situation.

The atmosphere has been produced whereby the child does not feel safe telling the truth. So you can't condemn the child for lying."

Explaining the psychological effect further, Perry said, "We do our kids no favours at all when we persecute them for lying. We can be curious about the lie, we can be interested in it and look at our part in it. But being draconian and rigid about it is not going to make a situation better and change our kid's mentality." THE INDEPENDENT