

M A R C H N E W S L E T T E R INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

FROM DAN HODGINS

DKJ5075@AOL.COM

Are They Really Lying?

Why do young children invent stories?

- To feel included
- They are not aware of behaviors that reflect the differences between what is right and what is wrong
- They are not aware of the differences between real and pretend
- They think the person who is receiving the story wants to hear it
- It is modeled by adults
- It allows them to be powerful in their world
- For FUN!

For more information on workshops contact me at:
DKJ5075@aol.com.
or visit my website:
www.danieljhodgins.com

When I first started out as a preschool teacher (not aware of what is developmentally appropriate) I invited a police officer to visit the program to discuss street safety with the children. The children were all gathered, waiting to hear what this man in a uniform, was going to say to them. To ease the children's minds he started out by asking the children, "Who has a dog?" All eighteen children raised their hands and yelled, "I do, I do, I do". Most of the children did not have a dog. One child described what color his dog was and what he liked to eat. This child never had a dog. Were they lying? I don't think so. They all wanted to be included in the discussion and creating "pretend" dogs would make that happen.

The act of lying doesn't usually exist for young

children. Lying requires that children be able to distinguish between right and wrong and real and pretend. Cognitively that doesn't often happen until around nine to 12 years of age. Leonard Sax indicates that the frontal lobe for girls might not develop until the ages of 16 - 18 and for boys 19 - 21. Sometimes you have to have a fully developed frontal lobe to understand the differences between right and wrong.

Many young children invent stories that prevent them from receiving certain consequences. Adults who ask a child, "Did you hit him?", frequently would get a response of, "No", even if the child did. Avoid asking a child a question that you already know the answer. They will create a story that best fits their needs

My daughter's kindergarden teacher was concerned about my daughter telling everyone that she went home and had a "cocktail" with her Papa. Her grandfather always greeted our daughter from school with a cocktail glass full of cranberry juice.

Supporting the differences between "Real" and "Pretend"

- Use the words "real" and "pretend" when describing their play (example, "It is fun to pretend to cook soup")*
- Provides lots of opportunity for "pretend play" (hairdresser, police officer, firefighter, etc)*
- Bring in "real" players (have snack with a police officer, have a fire fighter read stories in the book area, etc.)*
- Provide "real" tools for children to use (hammers, screw drivers, plungers, plates, etc)*
- Make statements about "real" vs. "pretend" behaviors ("I drive my car home", "I am pretending to drive a car in this chair")*
- Provide dramatic play experiences that include "real" objects(Making soup with real vegetables when you play restaurant; use real flowers or plants when playing flower/ plant shop)*
- Ask children questions that imply "real and "pretend" responses ("Was that a real story or a pretend story?")*