

Pro Tip: Sometimes it's OK to Lie

Teaching children when it's acceptable to lie may seem contrary to good parenting, but in certain situations it is necessary for their safety. For example, consider a child who is home alone when a stranger knocks on the door. Many parents instinctively tell their child to stay quiet and not answer, assuming the stranger will leave if no one responds. However, in some cases the person may be a burglar checking to see if the house is empty. Silence could actually encourage the burglar to attempt home entry—an outcome no parent wants when a child is alone inside.

A safer approach is to teach your child how to respond without opening the door. The child can ask who is there and what they want. If the stranger asks whether the parents are home, it is acceptable for the child to say "Yes." If the person then asks to speak with the parent, the child can respond that the parent is busy or in the shower and cannot come to the door right now. This response makes it clear the child is not alone and helps discourage further action.



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