



# Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

## NOVEMBER EPRESS

### QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

*My program wants to use the Protective Factors in our program as much as possible. They seem more positive and parents seem to respect them as universal advice, not specific advice. Besides training staff and handing out your fliers, what else can we do?*

Your interactions with parents can help them build their resilience and their beliefs in themselves as parents and decision-makers responsible for the future of their families.

Use every encounter, meeting, intake, visit, phone call as an opportunity to use the protective factor advice. Don't just focus on those handouts. They are supposed to be used in conjunction with modeling, encouragement, and coaching, not in place of them. We have dozens compiled on the website, and hope to start creating large posters for you to hang in your visit rooms in 2018. Those are reminders of the solid core of the protective factors. But those ebooks are the most important part of our training, and they are a launching off point for your staff.

In your next staff meeting, choose a family to review, and ask staff what elements of the protective factors would help that family. Create a strategy. Plan it around the knowledge of the family's strengths and challenges. Write down three or four things that you could do to help the family in the next two visits. Here's what your list might look like:

1. **Validate and support good decisions! Help visiting mom feel positive about the visit by finding and calling out what she does correctly, either during or after the visit.** Focus on her interaction with Antonio so she feels validated as a mom. Be specific. Instead of "You had fun with Antonio today," say "It was so great to see you reading together. I really liked the way you let Antonio try to say the big words before you showed him how to pronounce them. He got to try, and then you were able to support him in his success."
2. **Encourage parents to identify and deal with their emotions! When mom gets frustrated, be sure to acknowledge and name her feelings, and let her know that those feelings are common.** Help name feelings for this family.

Normalize that parenting is stressful. When mom leaves, encourage her to take care of herself. Give her some ways to do that – talk them out. It is possible to help mom realize that she needs a plan for the next time she gets frustrated. Help her make that small plan, and use it when she's upset. Will she close her eyes and count to ten before she responds? Will she practice breathing a few deep breaths and say out loud or to herself: I will get through this? Let her decide what she thinks is the best way to self calm when emotions are high.

3. **Develop problem-solving skills! When Antonio doesn't want to pick up his blocks in the room after the visit, encourage the two of them (mother and child) to work together to clean it.** This creates an opportunity for them to do something together.
4. **Project a positive and strength-based approach! Give dad a news clipping or notice about the hours of the public health clinic, or the free give-a-way days at the Goodwill store, or the story hour at the public library. Give him a referral to a service he might need.** Nearly every community has opportunities for low income families, but many families do not know about those options. Encourage help seeking behavior.

### Resources for Parents

Have you been on 211.org? It will connect you with your LOCAL resources. Just put in your zip code or city. There are Apps to load onto your phone and downloadable searchable databases. There are directories full of crucial services.

# Advice for Parents of Children with High Energy

By: Elena Simonsen

## Introduction

Sometimes, children's energy levels are much higher than those of their parents'. This may be a result of a difference in temperament, which is the way that each individual approaches life. Although children with high energy levels can be challenging to work with, there are many strategies available to parents and social service workers to use to draw upon these children's strengths and direct their energy into constructive activities.

## Objectives

This E-press serves to teach parents and social service providers:

- The basic characteristics of temperament
- The basic types of temperaments
- How parents can approach children with a different temperament or energy level from their own

## Temperament

Temperament is a quality that one is born with that determines how one deals with the world. Although this quality is innate, it can be influenced and changed by experience, especially earlier in life. **At least nine major aspects** of temperament have been identified, including:

1. **Activity level:** How physically active is the child on a daily basis?
2. **Rhythmicity or Regularity:** Does the child's daily activity have a regular pattern to it?
3. **Approach and Withdrawal:** How does the child respond to new things?
4. **Adaptability:** How well is the child able to adjust to new situations?
5. **Intensity:** At what level of energy does the child respond to situations?
6. **Mood:** What mood does the child's words and behaviors convey?
7. **Attention Span:** How long is the child able to stay focused on the same task?



8. **Distractibility:** How well is the child able to focus on a particular task? What does it take to divert his or her attention from what he or she is doing?
9. **Sensory Threshold:** How much stimulation does it take for a child to respond to a particular situation?

Every child has a unique combination of these traits that make up his or her temperament. These traits can be further combined into **three broader categories of temperament**, as defined below:

<b>Categories of Temperament</b>	
Category	Characteristics
<b>“Easy”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mood is usually positive</li> <li>• Is mild to moderately intense</li> <li>• Adapts easily</li> <li>• Low levels of anxiety</li> <li>• About 40% of children fall into this category</li> </ul>
<b>“Shy/Slow to Warm Up”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is mildly intense</li> <li>• Often has a negative mood</li> <li>• Is slower to adapt</li> <li>• Tends to withdraw from new things</li> <li>• Often has anxiety in new situations at first, but becomes more accepting over time</li> </ul>
<b>“Difficult/Challenging”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually reacts negatively and intensely</li> <li>• May be described as a child who has “temper tantrums”, is “hard to please”, and/or is “fussy”</li> <li>• May adapt poorly to new situations</li> <li>• May have behavioral issues and/or problems at school</li> <li>• About 10-20% of children fall into this category</li> </ul>

Recognizing patterns in children’s behavior and understanding his or her temperament can be helpful to parents and social service workers in deciding how to respond to them.

For example, parents of children that are “challenging” can respond by being patient with them and explaining transitions to them before they occur. Children’s temperaments can be used to help boost their strengths. When children are afraid to go to a new school, for example, parents can reframe this to them by saying, “It’s okay to be afraid to try something new. You value comfort, and at times this helps to keep you safe.”

## Children with High Energy Levels

It is very normal for children to have a lot of energy, especially young children. Sometimes, this energy is present on a daily basis and can be attributed to the child's temperament. Often, parents and service providers working with children with high energy levels do not have as much energy as these children. If children with higher levels of emotional and energetic intensity do not get the type and amount of attention that they need, they may act out to try to get attention even if it's negative. Parents and social service providers can use strategies to help children with higher energy levels meet their needs, including:

- Giving children *time, attention, and affection* every day
- Implementing a consistent, structured *daily schedule and telling children how you want them to behave* and *praising them* when they do so
- Keeping *instructions simple* so that it is easier for the child to understand and follow them
- Encouraging children to *be physically active*, whether through sports or by going for a walk with them
- *Playing with children*; you can try a board game for children who can appreciate



the structure or imaginary play

- Ensuring children are *getting enough sleep, eating balanced, nutritional meals, and not using electronics frequently. Excessive sugar, caffeine, and electronic use* may increase children's energy levels further
- *Being patient with children* and not using name-calling and labeling behaviors

when situations are difficult; this may lead children to internalize bad behavior as part of who they are

- *Model and encourage appropriate social skills*

Another way for parents and social service workers to cope with children with high energy is to match their energy levels to those of their children. Some ways that this can be done include:

- *Mirroring* what children are trying to communicate to you. This can be done using words, body language, and/or facial expressions
- Eating *healthy meals* with your children. Your body needs proper fuel to keep up with your children's needs
- Taking a *power nap* when you need it, and making sure to get *adequate sleep* each night
- Staying *hydrated* will also help you to keep your energy levels up

## Conclusion

Temperament often determines how one responds to the world around them. Knowing your child's temperament can be useful in daily interactions with him or her. As a result of temperament, some children have higher energy levels than others. It is important for children with higher energy levels to get the positive attention that they need so that they do not resort to inappropriate behavior in an attempt to get negative attention. Parents and supervised visitation monitors can approach children with higher energy levels by attempting to match their energy level or redirecting their energy into a different activity.

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# Why Do Kids Lie?

By Rose Antoine

## Introduction:

Researchers show that children begin to lie around the age of two years old, and as they age their lies only become more sophisticated in nature. The brain functions and thought processes used by children when they lie are an essential part to a child's growth and development. However, while using those brain functions are important, children must learn that lying is not okay, and that there are other ways to strengthen those functions without lying.

Many children will tell a lie, or several lies, to their parents, friends, or teachers at some point in time. As children mature, they gain the ability to understand intentions, beliefs, and the knowledge of others. This allows them to form lies based on what they think someone will believe. It is essential that parents have appropriate responses to those lies so children can learn that lying is not okay while continuing to grow and develop emotionally and cognitively.

## Objectives:

After reading this article, parents will:

- Understand the reason why children lie, and how to respond to their child when they tell a lie.
- Know what a developmentally appropriate lie is.



## The Reason Children Lie:

As children mature their reasons for lying change. Children generally do not lie with to hurt others, but in order to help themselves or process new information.

- **Toddlers: Fibs for Favor**
  - At the age of two, children generally have a grasp on their speaking skills, and they begin to wander into the realm of lying. At this age, children most often lie in order to serve themselves. They lie in hopes of escaping punishment and to gain favor or a prize.
  - They are unaware their small fib is wrong, they simply want to achieve a desired reaction.

- **Preschoolers: Telling Tall Tales**

- It is typical for children ages 3-to-5-years old to tell tall tales. They begin to lie for fun; this is the age of imaginary friends and outlandish stories.
- Kids at this age are beginning to use lying as a way to process new information, and to express how they view the world around them.



- **Schoolkids: They have a Reason**

- This is the age of white lies, where children use lies to spare feelings or help someone besides themselves. These type of lies are also called “prosocial” lies, they are becoming more aware and more considerate of others’ emotions and reactions.
- Children are able to think of others, and how they might react to lies.
- Children at this age will occasionally revert back to self-preservative lies. They may do this because they fear consequences, parental disappointment, or when they are unable to comprehend something. Sometimes children will lie about not having homework for subjects they do not understand.

- **Tweens: Living in the Grey Area**

- From ages 9-to-13 kids begin to live in the grey area between right and wrong. This is the age you should solidify what is right and wrong with your child, so they know that you want them to be honest with you. They have their own ideas of what truths and lies are, but they are still naive about what lies in-between.
- They will fall for ghost stories, omit details they use to be happy to share, and even try to pull a fast one over on their parents. This is simply the child maturing, occasional lies and omissions are normal.
- The best way to instill honesty in a child is to express displeasure with their lie, and for the parents to be an example for them. This means living an honest life, not even white lies, because children will pick up from adult tendencies.
- Make sure to explain that lying will harm the child’s credibility and relationships with others. Although it is normal for children to tell occasional lies, if a child is chronically lying it may be a sign of distress, and they may need help processing any stress they may be under.



## Parental Responses When a Child Lies:

Knowing what a developmentally appropriate lie for a child is can better prepare the parent for how to respond to their child's dishonesty. With every year, children will understand more, and it is important that the parent is able to help them transition into a new understanding of what the truth is. As the child grows older, he or she should be taught why the lie was bad, and why there will be consequences. This is a wonderful opportunity for the parent to demonstrate patience and nurturing and gentle discipline.

The chart below provides example of lies and how a parent can respond based on the child's age category.

Age	Example of a Lie	Parental Response to a Lie
Toddler	Sam, 2-years-old, accidentally broke the vase on the side table. When mom asks who broke the vase Sam denies it.	Mom should say "Look, the vase got broken. Let's clean it up." And she should talk about how accidents happen, and it is important for us to be honest with each other so we can help each other. She should also look around for other things that a toddler could break.
Preschoolers	Jessica has an imaginary friend, Alexis. This morning Jessica told her dad "Alexis" wet the bed.	Dad: "I am happy you and Alexis felt comfortable with telling me, let's get cleaned up and change the sheets." This response avoids shaming Jessica.
Schoolkids	William is having a hard time following directions in school, so his teacher writes a note in his planner for his parents to sign. Scared he may get in trouble William tells mom and dad he left his planner at school.	"William, let's sit at the table, and look through your backpack. I see your teacher wrote a note in here for me, tell me what happened in class today. Make sure you tell me the truth, because that's the only way we can work together to solve the problem."
Tweens	Destiny, 12 years old, had friends over, and watched a PG-13 movie she knows her mom wouldn't approve of. However, Destiny forgot to remove the movie off the recently watched list, and	Mom "Destiny, I saw you and your friends watched a rated PG-13 movie, which you know you're not allowed to do without my permission. I understand you wanted to watch the movie with your

	<p>her mom found out. When mom asks Destiny, she denies it.</p>	<p>friends, but because you lied to me, there's no movie or TV show watching until the end of the week. It's difficult for me to change the rules or give you more responsibility if you lie to me. We'll have another conversation about this at the end of the week. ”</p>
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**Conclusion:**

Lying is something most children learn to do. As children grow and mature, so does their lying. They are able to move from the tall tales of monsters under their bed, to adolescent lies of fake maturity. It is important for social service providers to talk with parents about understanding the different stages a child goes through with their lying, because parents play an important role in instilling honesty in their child. Supervised visitation monitors should remind parents not to get upset over the lies a child may tell them, but instead take the opportunity to discuss the lie and turn it into a lesson, so that child may learn from the exchange.

Knowing what stage of lying a child is in can better prepare the parent for a response, and this will keep the dialogue between parent and child open.

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The next page has a Fall Craft idea that  
parents and children can do together.

# Handprint Pumpkins

Kids can get a little messy with this fun finger-painting activity! Here's what you will need:

- Orange paint
- White cardstock paper
- Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils

## Directions:

1. Have your child dip his or her hand in the paint and place it on the white paper to make a pumpkin
2. Have your child use markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils to draw a stem and leaves on the pumpkin. They can also draw grass or some other type of background!

