



## I'm Telling! (Working with a tattler-tale)

"He hit me!" "She's coloring on my paper!" "He won't play with me!" "She called me a pig!"  
Do you hear these "tales" each day? Caring for a tattler-tale can be hard work.

### WHY DO CHILDREN TATTLE?

- Some children tattle to get attention.

If that's what is happening, stop giving the child attention for tattling. When she comes to you with a story about another child, don't respond, unless a child's health or safety is in danger.

Make sure you give the child who tattles attention at other times. Look for times to talk with him, praise him, and play with him when he isn't tattling. You need to switch the attention he's getting for tattling and give him attention at other times.

If Irene comes and says, "John says he's going to hit me," it's likely that John is trying to get attention. Some children love to send others off to tattle. This is a sign that both John and Irene need some attention from you. Make sure you give it to them at times when they aren't tattling.

Children may tattle because they don't know how to solve problems. Sometimes a simple reminder to talk with the other child is all that

is needed. Hannah runs over to tell you, "Gina called me Hannah Banana." You say to Hannah, "Tell Gina you don't like to be called that. Your name is Hannah."

Sometimes adults make tattling worse by solving problems for children. How would you handle this problem?

Sari comes to you and says, "Arlen took my blocks."

Do you:

- A. Go to Arlen, take the blocks and hand them back to Sari?
- B. Put the blocks away so no one can play with them?
- C. Take Sari back to Arlen to talk about why he took the blocks and work on solving the problem?

Teach children  
how to solve their  
own problems



If your answer was A or B, you've handled the problem for now. But Sari will come again and tattle to you because she hasn't learned how to solve these problems on her own.

Teaching children how to solve their problems is the key to stopping the tattling. Start by taking the child who tattled to the other child and get them to talk with each other.

Walk with Sari to where Arlen is playing and say, "Arlen, you and Sari have a problem. Sari says she was playing with those blocks and you took them."

Arlen says, "But I want to play with the blocks."

Sari says, "But I had them first." You say to both children, "How do you think you can work out this problem?"

## Some children tattle to get attention

Sari says, "I could play with the blocks and when I'm finished Arlen could play with them."

Arlen says, "No, I want to play with them now."

Sari says, "Well, I could play with the red blocks and Arlen could play with the blue ones."

Arlen says, "Okay."

The key to problem solving is to get the children to think about ways to solve the problem on their own. If they get stuck, you may need to give a few ideas to help them along. Be sure to stay with the children until both of them agree to the way to solve their problem.

Teaching children how to solve problems doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and some help from you. But the end result is worth it. No more tattling!



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