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## Kids Who Steal

Twenty-five percent of shoplifters are kids. They think they will not get caught. Law enforcement, however, takes shoplifting very seriously.

Parents of very young children can help prevent their child from stealing when they get older.



- Talk to your child about "mine versus yours." Start when your child is 2 or 3 years old. It is difficult for him to understand, but by 5 or 6 he will begin to know right from wrong.
- Expect mistakes. If a child takes something that is not hers, make that a teachable moment. Say, "In our home we do not steal." Go with your child to return the stolen item.
- Watch your child for impulsive behavior, especially as he gets older. Some children have a poorer impulse control than others.

- Be aware of your child's need to "fit in with the crowd." Kids want what other kids have.
- Discuss how your child can earn money to buy games and special clothes. Chores teach her the value of work and the new item.
- Use news stories about stealing to discuss the negative outcomes of stealing.
- Be a good role model. If you are under-charged at a store, tell the cashier. Make sure your child hears what you say.

Teach your children honesty from a very early age. Kids learn right from wrong by watching and hearing their parents. If your child takes an item, stay calm. Tell him it is wrong to steal. Help him learn from his mistake.

Information provided by The National Association for Shoplifting Prevention

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help. 1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. , 7 days a week.