



# REPORT to PARENTS

RP 27:7

## Cheating

**S**tudies have found that most children have cheated, or thought about cheating, on schoolwork. While schools battle this issue, there are two important things parents can do to help. First, from the time children are very young, parents must emphasize and reward honest behavior. Second, parents must make sure that their children know that cheating will not be tolerated at home or at school. Here are some more ways parents can stop children from cheating.

### Stop schoolwork-related cheating by:

#### Monitoring writing projects.

Plagiarism—passing off others' words or ideas as your own—used to mean copying a few lines or paragraphs from an encyclopedia. Today, with the help of the Internet, children can steal entire essays and research papers. Read your children's assignments before they turn them in. If the writing doesn't "sound" like theirs, talk with them about how they came up with the ideas. If necessary, explain that plagiarism is a serious form of stealing that can result in failing grades or even expulsion.

**Believing the teacher.** Teachers don't make accusations of cheating lightly. If the teacher says that your child was cheating, avoid getting defensive. First, get the facts. Then, if necessary, set up a meeting with everyone involved. Finally, establish consequences both for the specific incident and for any "repeat performances."

**Fighting peer pressure.** Peer pressure can be difficult to handle. Children may have a hard time rebuking a friend who asks to copy homework or peek at test answers. Remind your children that it's OK to say "no" to their friends. Let them use you as

an excuse: "Sorry. My parents would be furious if I let you see my homework."

**Allowing your children to do their own work.** Giving your child a little guidance about a school project is fine. Doing even a small bit of the work for them is cheating. You know it. Your child knows it. And so does the teacher.

### Battle other kinds of cheating by:

**Downplaying winning.** Children love to win and sometimes will do anything, including cheating, to achieve victory. Emphasize the reason for playing games or competing in sports is to have fun—win or lose. If you see or overhear them cheating, stop the game immediately and remind them of this. Teach them that any victory won by cheating is meaningless.

**Prohibiting pirating.** Not only is it dishonest to download music or copy computer games without paying for them, you and your child may face criminal charges and financial penalties for doing so. Instead, steer them toward the pay-for-play sites.

**Sharing stories.** When you read an article in a magazine or newspaper about an honest act—perhaps someone turning in a wallet full of money—share it with your children and talk about how important it is to resist the temptation to keep something that isn't theirs.

Finally, scrutinize your own behavior. If they see you using office supplies brought home from work, overhear you talking about subtle ways to cheat on your income taxes, or witness you calling in sick when you're not, they'll believe that cheating is OK.

