Table 1: Classification of the forms of apparent deception as observed by parents of 3- and 4-year-olds over a one month period (adapted from Newton et al., 2000).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Form of Deception** | **Typical Apparent Motive** | **Kind of question/situation provoking the falsehood** | **Exemplar Falsehood** |
| False denial | Avoidance of discomfort (physical or psychological) | Did you smash the egg? | No.  I didn’t do it. |
| False blame | Avoidance of discomfort (physical or psychological) | Who did that? | Adam.  Someone else. Not me. |
| False ‘nothing’ | Avoidance of discomfort (physical or psychological) | What have you got behind your back? What are you up to? | Nothing.  I’m not doing anything. |
| False assertion of permission | Material gain | Who said you could have that?  What did Dad say? | Dad said yes but ask you also. |
| False assertion of completion | Material gain | Have you eaten all your dinner?  Have you put it away? | Yes.  I did it. |
| False excuses (avoiding) | Avoidance of discomfort (physical or psychological) | Avoiding having to walk  Avoiding having to go to bed. | I’ve got a belly ache.  No. I’m not tired. |
| False excuses (seeking) | Material gain | Seeking push on scooter  Seeking medicine she likes | I’ve got a leg ache.  I’m sick (coughing) |
| Bravado (Didn’t hurt!) | Avoidance of discomfort (psychological) | Receiving injury after being warned of danger | That didn’t hurt |
| Bravado (Don’t care!) | Avoidance of discomfort (psychological) | Being prevented from having desired object  Being threatened with hated toy spiker | I didn’t want them anyway  I don’t care |
| False boasts | Avoidance of discomfort (psychological) | Responding to a friend’s boast | I got one of them (friend)  Well, I’ve got one too |
| Trickery (jokes) | Amusement (physical & psychological) | No typical provoking situation | I’m going to write on the floor mom. Only joking! |
| Feigned ignorance | Avoidance of discomfort (physical or psychological) | What’s happened to this? | I don’t know  I don’t know who mess it up (regarding tidiness of room) |