So far, sound and fury about Big Ten expansion signifying nothing

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By Dennis Dodd
CBSSports.com Senior Writer

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- In the two places on the University of Missouri campus where you would think they might be throwing a toga party on Monday, all was quiet.

Quiet in Jesse Hall, the administration building, where university news bureau executive director Mary Jo Banken wasn't sure her boss -- chancellor Brady Deaton -- was even around.

Quiet in the athletic offices at Mizzou Arena, where athletic director Mike Alden definitely was not high-fiving or popping champagne corks.

Mizzou to the Big Ten? Maybe, someday. Maybe six months from now, but not on Monday. At least that was the look of it as we, the media, reacted to a report that Missouri was among four schools "extended initial offers" to join the Big Ten.

In what has become the latest exercise of media tail-chasing, the day was spent vetting the validity of the report from Kansas City radio station WHB. The station intimated that Missouri, Notre Dame, Nebraska and Rutgers are The Ones, the long-awaited new members of the Big Ten.

Unless Notre Dame says no. In which case, the Big Ten could expand by only three. If it says yes, there might be one more school to add for the Big Ten to go to 16. So, it wasn't exactly a "done deal" as a Columbia TV website reported last week regarding Mizzou to the Big Ten. But that's why we have our noses pressed up against the windows of the Big Ten offices in Park Ridge, Ill. To speculate until Big Ten commish Jim Delany makes the official announcement in prime time on the Big Ten Network.

If there is an announcement at all, as Delany reminded us last month at the BCS meetings in Phoenix.

It's a great story, Big Ten expansion, without many solid leads. At this point, no one can be wrong and -- if you pick the right combination of schools -- everybody can be right. It's Big Ten Keno.

It's gotten weird. I found myself engaged in the media equivalent of stalking -- staking out an athletic director, which is...
what I did for 90 minutes Monday in the Mizzou Arena parking lot. Not that Alden would have said anything had I intercepted him Mike Wallace-style.

"The University of Missouri is receiving numerous inquiries related to public speculation about conference membership," Missouri's statement said. "MU is a member of the Big 12 Conference and will not respond to speculation about conference realignment."

An empty statement, but that was no surprise. Since the Big Ten announced in December it was exploring expansion, the school is basically on record as saying, "Yes, yes, a hundred times, yes!" to a Big Ten invite. The administration has gone silent lately, basically in cross-fingers-and-hope mode.

Rutgers issued a similar statement. Like Mizzou, the state university of New Jersey can barely contain itself. It wasn't too long ago that Rutgers played a bad brand of juco football. Now it has new facilities, a young aggressive AD (former CBS College Sports executive Tim Pernetti) and the prospect of someday lighting up New York the way it did in 2006 when it beat Louisville.

Nebraska denied the report outright that it had been offered an invitation. Not that it wouldn't, like Missouri, accept in a heartbeat. Both schools are dissatisfied with the revenue sharing in the Big 12. Both schools are highly rated research institutions that would fit in nicely with the Big Ten's lofty academic standards. Both schools are also fed up that the league might have gotten a burnt orange tinge to it, meaning too Texas-centric.

"Faculty are almost unanimous in favor of going to the Big Ten, because of the academic ramifications of it," said Brian Brooks, professor and associate dean at Missouri's School of Journalism.

Brooks, who got his undergrad from the J-school 36 years ago, is not only a professor, he's a Mizzou fan. He trotted out statistics showing the average ACT score of Missouri's incoming freshmen fit nicely in the middle of the Big Ten.

Whether it comes to football or paragraph transitions, then, Missouri is ready to whip some butt. But like the rest of us, all Brooks had to do was read down to the second paragraph of the report. "... nothing can be approved until the Big Ten presidents and chancellors meet the first week of June in Chicago ... " Sure, Missouri is a fit, but so are Syracuse and Pittsburgh. And what about that Big Ten meeting the weekend of June 5? The roster of invitees -- if indeed it has come to that -- could change in the room when the Big Ten CEOs start discussions. These are academicians first, not GMs.

"Whether the Big Ten is ready to go to 16 teams, wow, that is so disruptive to the world of college football, we'll see," said noted sports media consultant Neal Pilson, former head of CBS Sports. "Those are [four] schools that everyone has assumed are on the list in terms of potential universities. None of them surprises me."

July 1 seems to be a key date in the process. Big Ten presidents might want to finalize expansion plans before the end of the fiscal year. However, Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany reiterated last month that the league was staying with its initial 12- to 18-month process.

Since December, that process has now gone down to seven to 13 months. We can only take Delany at his word ... until word to the contrary leaks out.

WHB might have nailed it. If it got the scoop, good for them. But maybe it hit only three of four, or maybe even went hitless. We might not know for months, even a year. It's the nature of this story. No one is wrong and everybody can be right. Welcome, latest media friends, to Big Ten Keno.
MU officials discuss Big Ten, but no offers have been made

By MIKE DeARMOND

Missouri officials have begun internal discussions about the Big Ten Conference, The Kansas City Star has learned, though MU has not received an offer to join the Big Ten.

An Internet report Monday said the Big Ten has extended initial offers to four schools, including Missouri and Nebraska, to join the conference. But a source long involved in Missouri athletics told The Star that the Big Ten has made no such offer.

“There’s nothing there at all,” said the source, who said he had spoken with MU athletic director Mike Alden on Monday. “Not yet. … Nothing has changed.”

Nebraska chancellor Harvey Perlman replied “none whatsoever” when asked by the Lincoln Journal Star whether the report had any validity concerning his school.

And a Big Ten spokesman denied the report, telling the Chicago Tribune that “nothing has changed” since conference commissioner Jim Delany said last month at the BCS meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz., that everything regarding expansion was “to be determined.”

Although Missouri has not been asked to join the Big Ten, sources told The Star that Alden, MU chancellor Brady Deaton, MU system president Gary Forsee and other Missouri officials had a two-hour conference call Thursday to discuss conference realignment.

The call did not include any Big Ten officials, but Missouri officials are interested in how much its program is worth to the Big Ten and how much it would benefit from joining the Big Ten.

MU director of media relations Chad Moller declined to comment. The University News Bureau also released a similar statement.

“The University of Missouri is receiving numerous inquiries related to public speculation about conference membership,” the statement read. “MU is a member of the Big 12 Conference and will not respond to speculation about conference realignment.”
Nebraska Denies Report; Big Ten Says Timeline Still Months Away

By Vahe Gregorian

A Kansas City radio report Monday that Mizzou, Nebraska, Notre Dame and Rutgers had been offered membership in the Big Ten was debunked by Nebraska and greeted with no comments from MU, Rutgers, the Big East and the Big Ten — which added that its initial timeline of 12 to 18 months from December 2009 to study expansion remains intact.

Further suggesting it was another in a recent sequence of premature conclusions on the heavily-discussed topic, the radio report also apparently was at odds with the Big Ten’s declaration that it would contact commissioners of potentially affected conferences before approaching their institutions.

In an interview Monday afternoon shortly before the report from WHB/810 AM in Kansas City, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe told Stu Durando of the Post-Dispatch that he had not been notified by Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany about any intention to invite Big 12 schools into the Big Ten fold.

“But he will if he’s going to,” Beebe said. “If he’s going to approach any of our members, I trust he’ll call and let me know he’s reaching out.”

In declining comment, Mizzou invoked a generic statement that it has been using in recent weeks on the topic:

“The University of Missouri is receiving numerous inquiries related to public speculation about conference membership. MU is a member of the Big 12 Conference and will not respond to speculation about conference realignment. Mizzou continues to be grateful for all the interest shown in and support for the university.”

MU athletics director Mike Alden did not respond to an e-mail seeking comment.

WHB cited multiple sources “close to the negotiations” in reporting the offers.

If Notre Dame accepts the offer, the report said, the conference would make an offer to another school for a 16-member league.

If ND declines, the Big Ten would attempt to expand to 14.
The radio station also reported that nothing official would be forthcoming until the Big Ten chancellors and presidents meet in early June.

Later Monday, Nebraska issued a statement saying it “has not been offered any opportunity to move from the Big 12.” In an e-mail to the Lincoln Journal-Star, Nebraska chancellor Harvey Perlman said the report had no validity “whatsoever” in terms of Nebraska.
Missouri sticks by statement in face of Big Ten report

By Dave Matter

Posted May 10, 2010 at 4:58 p.m.

Missouri has neither confirmed nor denied the legitimacy of a Kansas City radio report that the Big Ten has extended an initial invitation for MU to join its conference. MU is officially sticking with its now widely circulated 49-word statement regarding conference realignment:

"The University of Missouri is receiving numerous inquiries related to public speculation about conference membership. MU is a member of the Big 12 Conference and will not respond to speculation about conference realignment. Mizzou continues to be grateful for all the interest shown in and support for the university."

MU spokesman Chad Moller declined to comment further on the topic.

Citing anonymous sources, 810 WHB reported Monday on its website that the Big Ten has informed Missouri, Nebraska, Notre Dame and Rutgers that "it would like to have them join" — although the same online report noted that "nothing can be approved until the Big Ten presidents and chancellors meet the first week of June in Chicago."

Big Ten coaches and athletic directors are scheduled to meet in Chicago May 17-19, followed by the presidents and chancellors meeting there two weeks later.

As for Nebraska, any invitation from the Big Ten, whether coined as "initial" or "official," was shot down by Chancellor Harvey Perlman, who told the Lincoln Journal Star via email, "None whatsoever," when asked if the WHB report has any validity.

Like Missouri, Nebraska issued a statement regarding the speculation. Though, unlike Missouri, Nebraska flatly denied being offered an invitation and also mentioned the Big Ten by name.

"The University of Nebraska has not been offered any opportunity to move from the Big 12. We remain committed to the success of the Big 12 Conference. Until the Big Ten Conference makes
and announces its decision on expansion, the University of Nebraska will have no further comment and we do not intend to continue to respond further to questions or speculations on this subject."
The Missouri athletics department is denying a report by a Kansas City sports radio station that MU has been extended an offer to join the Big Ten conference.

"No. It's all speculation right now. We're not going to comment on speculation," Dave Reiter, an associate director of media relations in the athletics department, said.

Reiter was adamant that Missouri has not been officially offered an invitation to join the Big Ten, which announced in December that it would look into expanding the 11-team conference.

The report of Missouri's invitation comes from the sports director of WHB-810 AM in Kansas City, Kevin Kietzman.

University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton released a statement regarding Monday's report of Missouri being invited to join the Big Ten conference. Mary Jo Banken, executive director of the MU News Bureau, said Deaton is out of town and unavailable for interviews. She also said the chancellor would not grant interviews on the topic of Missouri and the Big Ten when he returns to Columbia.

"The University of Missouri is receiving numerous inquiries related to public speculation about conference membership. MU is a member of the Big 12 Conference and will not respond to speculation about conference realignment. Mizzou continues to be grateful for all the interest shown in and support for the university," according to the statement.
COLUMBIA — During a late-September afternoon, Ana Gutierrez-Gamez walked across Lowry Mall talking to her mother on the phone. The MU freshman's mother does not speak English, so Gutierrez-Gamez spoke to her in Spanish.

A young woman she did not know approached. "You need to speak English — you're in America now," she said before walking off.

Gutierrez-Gamez, who had started attending MU a month earlier, was shocked. She walked to Gillett Hall holding in her emotions. But once she reached her dorm room, she burst into tears.

"I couldn't believe someone would be that rude to me," Gutierrez-Gamez said of the incident.

This was a private incident. Recently, public incidents involving race occurred on U.S. campuses, including the Compton Cookout at the University of California-San Diego and Mug Night at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Both incidents stereotyped African-Americans. At MU, a February incident in which cotton balls were scattered in front of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center brought conversations about racism to a campuswide level.

Racism is hard to talk about. On Monday evening, KBIA/91.3 FM and the Reynolds Journalism Institute held a forum on race and diversity in mid-Missouri for the weekly show "Intersection" to provide a medium to have this difficult discussion. Half of the hour-long show ran live on the radio, and the entire program is expected to be available online Tuesday at kbia.org.

Panel member Marie Glaze, human rights specialist for Columbia, described attempting to talk about race as a closed feeling you get in your throat. "When you start having this unvarnished discussion, it roils your insides," Glaze said.

Audience member Suzanne Burgoyne, a member of Difficult Dialogues, a program designed to help educators facilitate open-minded discussion, said a conversation about race is needed without oppressing others. A co-founder of the MU Interactive Theatre Troupe, Burgoyne described attending a theater conference at which there was bickering about who was truly oppressed.
"I was unhappy because everyone at the conference was competing for who's the most oppressed," said Burgoyne, one of about 50 people who attended the live-taping at the Reynolds Journalism Institute.

Gutierrez-Gamez, who along with others in this article shared their stories at different times, said she doesn't feel anyone is left of the conversation about race, even though it often centers on black-white relations.

“We (minority organizations) all agree even though we’re separated by race, we all have the same issues," said Gutierrez-Gamez, a member of the MU Hispanic American Leadership Organization.

**Passions cloud the discussion**

The 1977 TV miniseries "Roots" received wide acclaim, numerous awards and high ratings. The Museum of Broadcast Communications said "Roots" was credited with having a positive impact on race relations.

Not for Arnel Monroe, who was a fourth-grader at the time. For him, it was “one of the worse weeks of my life.”

Before "Roots," the Columbia teacher said he never viewed being black as something different. His world of church, neighbors, friends and schoolmates was black.

Since then, Monroe has used athletics and education to help him connect with others who were not African-American. His pursuit to play football and get an education took him to the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg from 1986 to 1991.

“The town was trying to get progressively better but still had some issues,” Monroe said. He recalled more open use of the n-word, something he rarely ran into growing up in Columbia.

Now a special education teacher at Hickman High School, Monroe thinks Columbia continues to be a progressive city as it grows in population.

“We have issues we have to discuss and work out, but we’re not afraid to work them out,” he said.

However, plenty of events in U.S. history can be a barrier to discussions about race: treatment of Native Americans by the early settlers, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s and current racial tensions developing from the illegal immigration debate.

Monroe said people must “leave feelings at the door” when talking about race because they get in the way of communication.

“There’s never going to be a sustained dialogue for too long because it draws too many feelings," Monroe said. "Race is one of those subjects that makes everyone uncomfortable.”
**How to handle racial dialogues**

Yve Solbrekken, a science education doctoral student at MU, has experience with helping others engage in a conversation about race as a former fellow of Difficult Dialogues. Race has long interested her. She described herself as a sensitive kid when it came to those suffering, including suffering because of racism.

"I’m troubled when people approach each other with preconceived notions because of race,” said Solbrekken, who is white.

In grade school, she had a friend named Melody, a member of a Native American tribe. The other children use to call Melody “ape face” because of their perception of her features. Solbrekken said she could not understand the mentality of her classmates.

"As a member of this human race, it's maybe an obligation, but at the very least, it's the right thing to do to intervene,” she said.

Solbrekken and Gutierrez-Gamez, a Mexican native who grew up in Sikeston, have some ideas about how to make dialogues on race work:

- Take a deep breath. When offense is taken, tell the person you’re not sure if you’re understanding them correctly and say what you think they’re saying, Solbrekken said.
- Don’t be afraid to speak your mind. If you’re included in the conversation, it’s because others want to hear what you have to say, Gutierrez-Gamez said.
- Keep emotions in check. “I can see why it could be intimidating,” Gutierrez-Gamez said about talking about race with people from other backgrounds.
- Try again. Solbrekken likes the idea of do-overs. “Let them rephrase, gather their thoughts and try again,” she recommended.

**Education is key**

“In academia, our purpose is to facilitate discussion about everything,” Solbrekken said. To reach the goal of limiting racial misunderstandings, education will have to play a role.

Some have felt that MU could do a better job of facilitating discussion. At a town hall meeting a few days after the cotton ball incident, requiring a diversity class at MU was a main topic of conversation. It was a renewed debate publicly, but the work concerning the recommendation has been going on behind the scenes for several years.

Monroe said teaching about diversity is important. “If we’re going to talk about America as a melting pot, we need to talk about all aspects of the pot,” Monroe said. “We need to celebrate all things that makes us America.”

During the "Intersection" taping, panel member MU Chief Diversity Officer Roger Worthington talked about how his mother was steered away from her Latino heritage when she attended school. What she experienced affected how she raised Worthington.
"My mom purposefully avoided teaching me Spanish because she viewed it as a determinant," Worthington said. His experiences helped lead him to his career of improving diversity on campus.

Fellow panel member Nathan Stephens, director of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, said a true litmus test of diversity is not in the causal events like playing sports together, but in the real issues such as "Can my daughter date your son?"

“We ought to change the way we socialize our children racially and otherwise,” Monroe said.

Lisa White, new president of the MU Legion of Black Collegians, agrees. She is used to being a minority in communities in which the majority is white. White went to private school until she went to Hazelwood Central High School in St. Louis. She was able to have both white and black friends, which she said helped her socialize when she came to MU.

“It equipped me for some of the things I wouldn’t have been ready for coming to college,” White said.

But she and Gutierrez-Gamez have found that at a university where 80 percent of the students are white, a lot of students tend to stick together by race.

“College has the ability to still shelter you from reality,” White said.

As the president of the Legion of Black Collegians, White’s job is to serve as a voice for African-American students on campus and air their issues and concerns. When asked why she is active in making that voice heard, White thought carefully before answering.

“If no one else will take up the responsibility," she said, "I will.”
Law professor: Obama's pick for Supreme Court is nonconfrontational

By Doug Davis
May 10, 2010 | 7:00 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The nomination of Elena Kagan to replace retiring U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens is a nonconfrontational choice by President Barack Obama, MU law professor Richard Reuben said Monday.

"It's not really ideologically charged," he said. "It's not a nomination that's going to make the other side mad."

If confirmed, she would be on the left — but not far left — of the Supreme Court spectrum, he said. She might disappoint liberal supporters of Obama.

Kagan has had a distinguished career in academics and now serves as Obama's solicitor general, but she is already drawing criticism because she has never been a judge.

Yet, prior judicial experience is not a requirement for court nominees, said Reuben, who has covered the high court for the American Bar Association Journal.

"It's disingenuous to say she's unqualified," he said.

In fact, Reuben said a judgeship wasn't considered critical until the last 20 years or so. A number of justices never served as judges before they were confirmed, including former Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Byron White, he said.

Many were academics, politicians or business people. Kagan, 50, was dean of Harvard University Law School prior to joining Obama's staff.

"She took a contentious faculty and reached out to the extremes," Reuben said. She built consensus and was effective as dean, he added.

Her nomination stands in contrast to the contentious Supreme Court nomination and confirmation process often seen since the failed nomination of Robert Bork in 1987. Bork, a strong conservative put forth by President Ronald Reagan, was to be a replacement for retiring Justice Lewis Powell, then the ideological center of the court, Reuben said.

If Kagan is confirmed, she might change the reasoning through which the court arrives at decisions, he said, but she would probably not change those decisions.
Supreme Court nominations were not as political before Bork, Reuben said. His nomination was seen as an attempt to change the balance between liberals and conservatives.

John Paul Stevens, whom Kagan would replace, is considered one of the high court's more liberal members. Reuben said if Kagan is confirmed, it would not represent a shift in power between ideological extremes.

That does not mean that she will be confirmed without going through tough questions, he said.

"Everybody gets questioned."
COLUMBIA — Students might be cramming for finals now, but by the weekend, it will be commencement time for seniors and graduate students finishing their degrees.

Colleges and professional schools from MU will grant a total of 5,532 degrees during commencement ceremonies this weekend, an increase from the 4,963 granted by MU in spring 2009.

Stephens College will confer 184 bachelor's degrees and 57 master's degrees in two separate graduation ceremonies on Saturday — one for graduate and continuing studies degree recipients, the other for undergraduates. Last spring the college awarded 165 bachelor's degrees and 39 master's degrees.

Each MU degree or certificate-granting program hosts their own graduation ceremonies, kicking off with the College of Veterinary Medicine at 1 p.m. Friday and concluding with the College of Law at 1:30 p.m. Sunday.

Students selected by their college or school to receive academic honors — whether honors certificates, departmental, divisional, university honors or Latin honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude) — will take part in the honors ceremony at 9 a.m. Saturday morning at Francis Quadrangle.

Two MU graduates will receive honorary degrees at the honors ceremony: Leon Russell and Eugenie Scott.

Russell, a faculty member at Texas A & M University, received a bachelor's degree in animal science and a doctorate in veterinary medicine at MU. Russell has worked in the areas of public health, toxicology and zoonotic disease (disease which affects humans and animals alike).

Scott, an author and researcher, received a doctorate in anthropology from MU and is the executive director of the National Center for Science Education in Oakland, Calif., which provides educational resources to counter efforts to eliminate evolution from school curricula.

Rose T. Dunn will give the keynote talk at Stephens College graduate and continuing studies commencement ceremony. Dunn is past president of the American Health Information...
Management Association. Kristen Burnfin, receiving a master of education in curriculum and instruction, will be the student speaker.

Stephens College President Dianne Lynch will give the keynote address at the Stephens College undergraduate ceremony. The class speaker will be Alexandra Abrams, graduating cum laude with a B.S. in mass media.

See more details about the MU Spring Commencement here. Here is more information on the Stephens commencement.
MU architecture students share airport design plans

By The Associated Press
May 10, 2010 | 10:03 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Columbia Regional Airport is getting some help with possible plans to renovate its passenger terminal.

Senior students in the University of Missouri's architectural design program will share their ideas with airport officials and Columbia City Council members on Tuesday afternoon. Architecture professor Binyamin Schwarz called the plans "very attainable and accessible."

The airport has seen a resurgence of late with daily regional jet service on Delta Air Lines. Columbia last had jet service a decade ago and until recently was served by a succession of smaller, regional carriers.
COLUMBIA — MU Professor Michael Podgursky will continue his position as chairman for the Missouri State Advisory Committee for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for two more years, according to a press release from the commission.

Podgursky was appointed chairman of the 13-member committee two years ago, and his reappointment comes in the middle of the committee’s reviews of K-12 education in Kansas City and St. Louis.

“These advisory commissions are supposed to monitor developments and give information to the national commission,” Podgursky said. “The idea is to elicit input.”

The committee’s hearings in schools throughout Kansas City and St. Louis aim to determine if kids have equal opportunities or if civil rights issues exist in schools, he said.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was formed to investigate complaints and collect information regarding discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin, according to its website. Advisory committees have been formed in each state and the District of Columbia to study issues on a local scale.
Your child tells you he didn't eat a cookie despite the tell-tale crumbs all over his mouth. You call your boss to say you're taking "a sick day," feigning a cough while on the phone. You're both lying, but is it the same?

Whether we're 2 years old or 62, our reasons for lying are mostly the same: to get out of trouble, for personal gain and to make ourselves look better in the eyes of others. But a growing body of research is raising questions about how a child's lie is different from an adult's lie, and how the way we deceive changes as we grow.

The Lying Life

Research suggests we begin lying as toddlers and keep on as adults, but how we deceive changes as we age. View chart

Developmental psychologists are trying to understand lying through behavior. Neuroscientists are tracking which regions of the brain are activated when we spin lies. Their results could shed light on issues from why a tween lies to your face about breaking a vase to whether young children can be trusted to give eye-witness testimony in court. One intriguing new study suggests that lying may spring from a completely different part of the brain in children compared with adults.

What has become clear from studies including the work of Kang Lee, a professor at the University of Toronto and director of the Institute of Child Study, is that lying is a sign of normal maturation.

Parents and teachers who catch their children lying "should not be alarmed—and their children are not going to turn out to be pathological liars," says Dr. Lee, who has spent the last 15 years studying how lying changes as kids get older, why some people lie more than others as well as which factors can reduce lying. "The fact that their children tell lies is a sign that they have reached a new developmental milestone."

Dr. Lee and Victoria Talwar, a colleague he often collaborates with at McGill University, conducted a series of studies in which they bring children into a lab with hidden cameras. Children and young adults age 2 to 17 are enticed to lie by being told not to peek at a toy—often
a plush purple Barney dinosaur—that is put behind the child's back. The test giver then leaves the room for one minute, ostensibly to answer a phone call, giving the child ample time to peek at the toy. Whether or not the child sneaks a look is caught on tape.

For Parents: the Truth About Lying

- Lying is normal and isn't a problem unless kids lie frequently and consistently.
- Ask a child to promise to tell the truth. Children who promise are much more likely to tell the truth than kids who aren't asked to promise.
- Lying shouldn't be ignored. When a lie comes to light, be explicit with children that it is wrong to lie.
- Don't set up children to lie. If you know they committed a transgression, don't ask if they did it. Instead, ask why they did it.
- If a child confesses, thank them for telling you the truth. If kids are only punished for lying, they will be more likely to lie in the future, according to studies.
- Stories with an ending that show truth-telling as a good thing appear more effective at damping lying than fear- or punishment-based stories (e.g., Pinocchio's nose grows longer when he lies).

Source: American Pain Foundation

For young kids, the temptation to cheat is "tremendous" and 90% peek in these experiments. Even adolescents and adults are tempted in similar situations, says Dr. Lee.

When the test giver returns to the room, the child is asked if he or she peeked. At age 2, about a quarter of children will lie and say they didn't. By 3, half of kids will lie, and by 4, that figure is 90%, studies show.

This trend continues until kids are about 15. By that age, nearly everyone who cheated in the experiment will lie about it. The good news: The number of liars begins to decline beyond this age. By 17, the percentage that lies drops to about 70%.

Researchers have also examined why some kids lie more than others, and have found that it isn't related to better moral values or religious upbringing. Rather, it's kids with better cognitive abilities who lie more. That's because to lie you also have to keep the truth in mind, which involves multiple brain processes, such as integrating several sources of information and manipulating that information, according to Shawn Christ, a neuropsychologist at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The ability to lie—and lie successfully—is thought to be related to development of brain regions that allow so-called "executive functioning," or higher order thinking and reasoning abilities. Kids who perform better on tests that involve executive functioning also lie more.
To get a clearer picture of potential differences between adult and child lying, recently Markus Kruesi and colleagues at the Medical University of South Carolina scanned the brains of a couple dozen children ages 10 to 16 and adults ages 19 to 40 while they were telling the lies and telling the truth.

As the children and adults lied, the researchers expected to see increased blood flow due to neural activity in the frontal regions of the brain, where executive functioning is thought to be carried out. That happened in adult scans, but none of the frontal regions in the children's brains showed the activity.

While it is too early to know why these differences exist, Dr. Kruesi is looking into whether other areas of the brain, such as those tied to emotion, might be more active when children lie.

When it comes to covering up their lies up, studies show that kids learn quite young that they need to disguise their lying, and very quickly adopt truthful-looking behaviors—like not looking away when questioned. Dr. Talwar's work has shown that it's hard even for a young child's own parent to detect when the child is lying just by looking at the child's behaviors.

But young kids often give themselves away verbally, according to recent research by Drs. Lee and Talwar. Kids may say they didn't peek at the Barney doll, but when the experimenter asks, "What do you think the toy is?" the children blurt out, "Barney." When asked how they knew, many children then confess.

Starting around five, children begin to understand that such an answer gives their deception away, so they pretend to guess or come up with better reasons for why they knew the answer. Even so, the logic may be flawed. Dr. Lee recounted how one little girl asked to place her hand underneath a blanket that was over the toy before she answered the question. After feeling the toy but not seeing it, she said, "It feels purple, so it's Barney!"

By seven, the majority of kids can conceal their lying and cheating very well. "The time to catch a liar is before eight years of age," says Dr. Lee.

So what's a parent to do after that? Some studies suggest there is no long-term effect of parenting on lying behavior, but the work of Dr. Talwar and her colleague Angela Crossman at the John Jay College at the City College of New York shows that a certain type of parenting style seems to discourage lying. They suggest parents discuss why there are rules against lying. Also, parents who point out when kids lie—and also acknowledge when children come clean—can foster more truth-telling, says Dr. Talwar.

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