

## Water Aid Collection

During our Whole School Unit exploring **WATER**, we are leading a collection of funds for Water Aid ([www.wateraidamerica.org](http://www.wateraidamerica.org)) to help poor communities in Africa, Asia, the Pacific region and Central America gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education, and work to influence policy. The children will be making small banks to collect coins during the month and then bring to the Family Festival on February 28<sup>th</sup>. We are also accepting larger donations, so feel free to bring cash or a check made out to WaterAid, either to the school office or on the night of the festival. We appreciate your generosity!



## Perhaps you wondered ...

... why children suddenly start lying when they're about 5 years old.

Many developmental gains have both positive and negative aspects. When children learn to crawl and then walk, we need to carry them less and they can be more independent, BUT we also need to childproof the house more thoroughly and keep a close eye on them because they haven't yet learned to judge what's risky and safe. Children learning to talk is a wonderful boost to family communication, BUT they then begin repeating what they've heard, including both the affirming and public information and the swear words or secrets. Similarly, the lying that children begin to do as they approach age 5 is the down side of a really important cognitive advance that psychologists call **Theory of Mind**.

Before age 5, children's understanding of their own and others' minds is quite limited. Once they know something, they have trouble reasoning about a time when they did not know it. One classic task involves showing children a familiar box, such as a Crayola crayon box, and then asking them what they think is inside. Children will, of course, say, "crayons". The experimenter then shows the child that there is something unexpected in the box, like marbles. After the surprise, the experimenter asks what the child thought was inside the box before it was opened. Preschoolers will typically answer, "marbles". Furthermore, if asked what another child who hasn't seen what's in the box will say when asked the first question, the child will again respond, "marbles", as if the child believes that everything she knows is known by everyone else also.

Understanding that our minds are separate is crucial for interpersonal relations and communication because it guides our level of explanation when telling a story, based on whether the hearer knows the place, the people involved, etc. It's also what helps us understand the value of keeping a secret or arranging a surprise. On the other hand, it is what also leads to children experimenting with lying. If children continued to believe that parents and teachers know everything they know, there would be no point in lying, but the advent of this theory of mind helps the child to realize that we do not actually know the truth unless they tell us. Together with a fear of disappointing us, the theory of mind makes a lie quite tempting. The key for parent response to lying behavior is to discuss the problem directly. Help the child understand that it is important for you to know the truth and that telling the truth helps people know they can trust you. At this point in school, we are also talking about stories that are true and others that are from our imagination (non-fiction vs. fiction). It's wonderful for children to begin exploring the types of stories that they can imagine, but sometimes they do not signal which type of story they are telling. Feel free to ask them whether their story is a true story that really happened or whether it is something from their imagination.