



By Gregory Ramey, PhD, child psychologist at Dayton Children's and *Dayton Daily News* columnist

Questions from readers

Question:

My fifth grader wants a profile on Facebook, arguing it would be great way to keep in touch with other kids and make new friends. I don't understand exactly how this works, but I'm uneasy. Is it now common for kids to have their own profiles on Facebook?

Answer:

Regardless of what other kids are doing, you need to make a decision about what you feel is best for your daughter. Sign on to Facebook so you can get a better understanding of what is involved. Kids can get their own profiles on Facebook. Frankly, I wouldn't allow a Facebook profile at your daughter's age. However, you are in the best position to judge her maturity level and whether this is appropriate for her. Be certain that you exercise close supervision if you allow her to join this network.

Question:

I got really upset at my 8-year-old the other day and yelled at her for something that I'll admit was pretty minor. I've never done that in my life and was very upset with myself. What she did was clearly wrong, but my response was an overreaction. Do you think I should say anything to her or just let it go?

Answer:

Lighten up on yourself. Raising children is very difficult, and we can't expect to always be ideal parents. Despite our best efforts, we all occasionally make mistakes.

Apologize to your daughter for yelling at her. Don't try to make excuses, or talk about "stress." Instead, tell her your plan to avoid similar situations. When you feel yourself getting really upset, it's probably best to simply walk away and speak with her later.

Talking with your daughter is a great way to teach her how to deal with such situations. Acknowledge your mistakes, apologize and identify what you will do differently in the future.

Question:

My husband and I are very close to our 7-year-old and will be talking with him in the next few weeks about our impending divorce. I know this will absolutely crush him. Do you think I should locate a therapist to help him through this?

Answer:

The way you and your husband handle this difficult situation is more important than finding a therapist. Speak with your son together. Keep your explanations direct and simple. Reassure him as much as you honestly can about the things in his life that will stay the same. His focus will be on practical concerns such as where he is going to live, toys, friendships, school, etc. Try to maintain a positive a relationship with your spouse, and work out a visitation arrangement that meets the needs of your son.

While therapy can be helpful in some situations, recognize that the way you and your husband deal with these difficult times will be the key factor in determining how things work out with your son. I wish you the best.

Gregory Ramey, Ph.D., is a child psychologist and vice president for outpatient services at The Children's Medical Center of Dayton. For more of his columns, visit www.childrensdayton.org/ramey.