



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

Questions from readers

Question:

My 20 year old daughter recently told me that when she was 8-years-old, she was sexually molested by our female babysitter. My daughter feels she has gotten over this situation but I wonder if I should do anything at this point.

Answer:

Be very supportive of your daughter as she comes to grips with what can be an extremely traumatic and difficult situation. Let her know that you are available to discuss this issue with her at any time.

In addition, you might want to encourage her to seek help and speak with a therapist. Professional assistance can be extremely beneficial in assisting adults in understanding and putting such experiences behind them.

Finally, there is a legal question as to whether your daughter wishes to pursue criminal charges against this individual, which may still be permissible in spite of your daughter's age. The person who did this to your daughter could have done this (or still be doing it) with other children.

Childhood sexual abuse is a tough issue for many adults. Be there for your daughter and assist her as she goes through this process.

Question:

My daughter is entering the fifth grade and has already talked about going on dates with other groups of kids to see a movie. I just think this is way too early for her to be thinking about boys and want to discourage this with her. However, I understand this is typical at her age and I don't want my personal feelings to inhibit her social development.

Answer:

You are her parent. You know what's best for her. If you feel that her going on dates at her age is inappropriate, simply say no. You owe her no other explanation other than to say that in your judgment she is too young to be dating boys even in group situations.

Question:

My 5 year old son continues to wet the bed about three or four times a week. I'm told this is not uncommon, but I wonder when I should have this treated.

Answer:

Bedwetting occurs in approximately 10 to 15 percent of children his age. It is twice as common in boys as in girls, and tends to occur where there has been a family member with a history of this problem.

Bedwetting is typically not treated by either physicians or psychologists until your child is a bit older, somewhere between the ages of 7 to 10 years of age. The three main approaches to treatment involve use of a bedwetting alarm, behavior therapy or medication.

Many children outgrow this problem on their own. If this doesn't happen in the next few years, consult your family doctor regarding what treatment options might be best for your child. In the meantime, please reassure your child that this is not his fault and that help is available if this problem continues.

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.