

## **Ask Miriam...**

*Individuals and families in the community are faced with challenging issues and concerns regarding their social, emotional and psychological health. Through the cooperation of The Jewish World, Jewish Family Services will offer responses.*

**Q. Dear Miriam,**

**I am a single parent and have two children.**

**School vacations are always a challenge because of child care. My children are 10 and 12 and I can't leave them alone. I have made arrangements with friends, neighbors, and family for the summer.**

**However, they are asking me why they can't go to camp like most of their friends. I feel guilty that I can't send them. How can I explain this to them so they won't be angry with me?**

**Guilty Mom**

A. Dear Guilty Mom,

You are the key to how your children understand the fact that they can't go to camp. They are entitled to be disappointed that they can't go. You can certainly share the disappointment openly with them.

Don't try to convince them that they will have a lot more fun than the children who go to camp.

Brainstorm with them how all of you can use the resources available to you to plan some special events during the summer. See if you are able to use some of your vacation time just to spend time with them and plan some inexpensive day outings, Five Rivers, Thatcher Park, hiking, etc.

You can use this situation to help them learn how to deal with disappointment, by being resourceful and creative and not use it to blame others. Your children can come to appreciate a sense of family working together to have fun.

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**Q. Dear Miriam,**

**We have been having an ongoing discussion with our 16-year-old son about working this summer. My wife and I want him to work so that he can both learn to be responsible and the value of money.**

**He says that he has worked hard all year and he wants to take it easy this summer and hang out with his friends. It is true that he did work hard this past year and did very well. However, we feel that doing well was the reward—not taking this summer off!**

**We are at an impasse. What should we do?**

**Tough Parents**

A. Dear Tough Parents,

The move from being dependent financially on parents to independence is a long road usually over many years. First, does your son understand your motivation in wanting him to work? He needs to buy into the payoff of having his own funds and what that means in terms of becoming a mature person.

The issue is not only about money. It is about learning responsibility and feeling good about himself.

Most teens will respond in a positive manner when presented with a fair and logical proposal. So, have a bottom line in what you will settle for, but be willing to compromise so it is a win win situation for both of you. Maybe he can work in the beginning of the summer and take some time during the second half of the summer. Perhaps he could use some of the funds to purchase something special.

This discussion can be a model for many future issues that will arise.

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*Miriam Adler, A.C.S.W., C.S.W., is assistant director of J.F.S. She answers most frequently asked questions. please send questions to “Ask Miriam,” c/o Jewish Family Services of NENY, 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY 12208 or e-mail [info@jfsneny.org](mailto:info@jfsneny.org) or call 518-482-8856.*