

# 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**, Miriam Adler of the Jewish Family Services will offer responses.

## Q. Dear Miriam,

*My husband and I have been having a difference of opinion and we would like your input.*

*He says that I am too protective of our children especially when it comes to things that happen outside of the home.*

*I feel that my role is to protect our children when others are critical of my kids or when something happens in school that is unfair.*

*My husband says that we should allow the kids to fend for themselves a little more and try to solve their own problems.*

*They are 10 and 13 and I think they are too young.*

*How can we bring our views together?*

**Mom and Dad**

## A. Dear Mom and Dad,

Parents have a distinctive role in raising their children. Our ultimate goal is to help them develop the skills to take care of themselves. Along that route are some pitfalls that necessitate balancing roles as a parent and as a mom or dad who wants to be seen as the "good guy."

Children don't reach a magic age of being ready to take care of themselves. It is a process from birth onward as we teach and model for our children. This means that children learn from every experience, some of which may be negative. As parents, we need to help them process the situation and their behaviors. We can't automatically spring into a protective role because it is our child. In the short term, children may be upset or angry with parents, but with parental consistency, they will learn how to evaluate a situation and choose appropriate behaviors.

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## Q. Dear Miriam,

*My husband and I have one child, an 11-year-old girl. I seem to be the appointed parent who handles the day-to-day mundane things. As our daughter gets older and starts to be more involved with friends and school, she has more issues that come up. I feel that I handle all of these alone.*

*My husband says that since she is girl, I should be the one to take care of things with her and he totally supports me.*

*I feel he is abdicating his parental role. What is the answer to this issue?*

**Mom Alone**

## A. Dear Mom Alone,

It is not uncommon, even in equalitarian households, for one parent, usually mom, to take the lead in day-to-day parenting with children.

It is crucial, however, for both parents to be involved in the discussions, decision-making and raising of the children.

Even if one parent totally supports the other, the lack of actual involvement with the children will give the wrong message.

You want to teach your children by your model, the balance between two parents and the different roles each takes.

A child learns as much from observation as by direct discussion.

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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 madler@jfsneny.org or call 518-482-8856.**

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