

## 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,**

*Camp is around the corner and our son is going to sleep away camp for the first time. We are anxious about it and we are not sure if it is our anxiety or are we are picking up concerns from our son who is 10.*

*In either case or more likely some of both, we would like to know how we prepare him for camp?*

**First Time Camp Parents**

### **A. Dear First Time Camp Parents,**

First time big experiences can be anxiety provoking for both adults and children. Remember that camp should be a maturing and enjoyable experience. You don't want to over prepare your child and create more anxiety.

I would acknowledge with him this big step in growing up and going away.

Express your confidence in his ability to handle himself and make good judgments.

This means that he doesn't have to solve all of his problems alone. In camp, mom and dad are not there, but counselors are. It is okay for him to ask for help, or ask to discuss concerns with them.

Prepare him for the fact that there will be a lot of new people and making friends can be a slow process. He may be in a position to have to make decisions about behaviors without a parent or counselor being there. Advise him that those times he can think about what mom and dad have suggested in similar times or to reflect on what he has already knows about being fair, honest, considerate.

Let him know that you would not be sending him to camp if you didn't think he was ready. Let him know that you think he will have a good time and meet new friends. Your confidence will transfer to him.

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### **Q. Dear Miriam,**

*Our son is getting his first summer job. My wife and I are in disagreement about what should happen with his earnings.*

*I feel that he should use some of his earnings to pay for things we would have ordinarily paid for or given him an allowance to cover.*

*My wife feels that since we don't need his assistance, he should be able to use his wages as he wishes. Can you help suggest a compromise between the two points of view?*

**Troubled About Money**

### **A. Dear Troubled About Money,**

Your son's first job offers an opportunity to start early training about money management and responsibility. We have all heard about the targeting of young adults by credit card companies with resulting disasters. This is your chance to teach your son about being financially responsible.

Before he starts his job, sit down with him to figure out what he will pay for to help take care of his own needs. This can range from tickets to concerts, movies, clothing, lunches, etc. to putting some away for college or to be used during the year when he isn't working.

The bottom line is that not all of his wages can be used at his discretion.

If you are consistent, the lessons learned will be invaluable to him throughout his life.

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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](mailto:madler@jfsneny.org) or call 518-482-8856.