



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

## Questions from readers

### Question:

My 9 year old daughter walked in on me and my husband when we were being intimate and she saw things that she never should have seen. She left the room immediately and has not said anything about this. Should I leave well enough alone or talk to her?

### Answer:

Although this was an embarrassing situation, it does give you a wonderful opportunity to speak with your daughter about sexual matters. At her age, she is already being bombarded with sexual images and messages from television, computers and conversations at school. Wouldn't you rather speak with her about these topics, rather than let her try to figure out things on her own or rely on peers?

Let her know that sexual affection between married couples is normal. Emphasize that you are always available to answer any questions regarding sexual issues and will never tell her that she is too young to know something. Communicate the importance of your own values regarding sexual behavior as well as health related concerns.

What's more important than the words you use is the attitude that you convey. Approaching this topic in a somewhat light-hearted, casual and open manner is the best way to let your daughter know that you are there to help her deal with an important part of growing up.

### Question:

My son graduated from high school and just informed me that he is not going to college next month as planned. He intends on living at home and trying to find a job. I am heartbroken by this

decision, but nothing I say or do seems to affect him. He's a good kid, but I don't know how to convince him he is making the most serious mistake of his life.

**Answer:**

Now that you've expressed your opinion, stop badgering him and develop some clear expectations regarding his decision to live at home. As a legal adult, how does he intend to support himself? Make certain that he deals with the consequences of this important decision.

College is not for everyone and some kids need time after high school to appreciate the value of education. Your son's decision not to attend school doesn't mean he'll never attend college. Let him work through these issues, but be careful that you don't continue to financially support or enable his lifestyle.

**Question:**

My 2-year-old is not developing as quickly as his older sister did at his age. I've spoken with my family doctor, who told me that kids develop at different rates and I shouldn't be concerned. He has minimal language, isn't potty trained and seems different from the other kids.

**Answer:**

Trust your instincts on this one and ask your family doctor for a referral to a developmental pediatrician or a developmental psychologist who can do an evaluation of your child. If there are any problems, early intervention is absolutely critical.

**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](http://www.childrensdayton.org/ramey).**