

Cases to Examine: Parenting Dilemmas



Read each of the following cases carefully. Then decide on a course of action, circle the appropriate letter, and explain your reason.

Case 1

When four-year-old Jason and three-year-old Annie go someplace in the car with their mother, they usually start bickering in the back seat. Before long they are teasing, pinching, poking, and screaming. It is distracting to their mother and therefore unsafe. She is exasperated by their behavior. What would you do if you were their mother?

- a. Take only one child at a time in the car until they grow out of this phase, even if it means getting a baby-sitter for one of them.
- b. As soon as the children start acting up, stop the car, give each of them a sound spanking, and say, "You're never going to act up like that in this car again!"
- c. When the children start acting up, stop the car and say firmly, "I will not drive as long as you misbehave." Then sit quietly until they are orderly.
- d. Assume that the children are just tired and cranky and, when they get into the car, offer them a snack to make them feel less irritable.

• The reason for your decision:

Case 2

Eight-year-old Michelle's parents suspect that she has been taking a dollar here and a dollar there from their wallets, but they are not totally certain. If you were her parents, what would you do?

- a. Confront Michelle with what you think she has done: "Do you know what becomes of children who steal? They end up getting arrested someday and maybe even going to jail. Now why did you do such a thing?"
- b. Wait until you have absolute evidence that Michelle has taken a dollar from you, even if it means leaving money as "bait." Then say, "You took a dollar from my wallet. Give it back." If she denies it, tell her, "I'm certain that you took the money. Now return it." If the money has already been spent, discuss how it could be paid back.
- c. Say, "Michelle, did you take some money from our wallets?" If she denies it, tell her, "You'll feel a lot better if you just own up to it and quit lying."

• The reason for your decision:



Case 3

Kevin takes his dad's new car to the prom. Without much coaxing, Kevin has several drinks during the night and becomes somewhat intoxicated. His date is in no better shape. On the way home in the car, she starts tickling Kevin, who momentarily loses control of the car and sideswipes an old pickup truck. Panicking, he drives away from the scene, takes his date home, and arrives home himself. Early the next morning, his furious father demands and gets an explanation of what happened. Kevin concludes, "But, Dad, the pickup was a junker anyway." What would you do if you were Kevin's dad?

- a. Tell Kevin that he does not have to call the police because if he gets ticketed, his insurance will skyrocket. However, make him pay for the damage done to the car and ground him for a month.
- b. Call the police. When they arrive, tell them, "My son was really smashed and should not have been driving. He should get what he deserves."
- c. Say, "Kevin, what you did was stupid, but I did crazier things when I was your age. When you drink, drink only just enough. The insurance will cover the repairs, but you can't use my car again."
- d. A decision of your own design . . .

• **The reason for your decision:**

Case 4

Your daughter Kristin, a high school junior, is an honor student. She has been nominated by the local chapter of an international organization to be an exchange student in Singapore during her senior year. Most of the expenses will be paid by the organization, but you will have to pay more than you can afford. Kristin is somewhat shy and has never been very far away from home. On the other hand, she wants to go. If you were her parents, what would you do?

- a. Say no because Kristin is too young to go to a foreign country on her own.
- b. Take out a loan to pay for the trip and assure Kristin that you will do whatever is necessary to send her the money she needs.
- c. Tell Kristin that if she can make enough money at a summer job and maintain her grades, she might be able to go.
- d. A decision of your own design . . .

• **The reason for your decision:**
