

LIFESTYLES

Parent says its okay to try drugs

GWENDOLYN BAINES

Ask Gwendolyn



Dear Gwendolyn:

Yesterday I had a conversation with a man who said it is all right to try drugs, but don't keep trying them. That bothers me. He is the father of three teenagers. His wife is a junkie. I could not convince him he should not be advocating this to his children. I told him that certain drugs become addictive after the first use. I did not want this conversation to turn into an argument. These days, you never know what people are carrying in the form of a deadly weapon. I'm upset because I couldn't seem to reach his thinking.

Olivia

Dear Olivia:

Calm yourself. You could not reach his thinking because he doesn't think like you. You would have had to lower your level of thought in order to agree with his. It is sad, however, for the children. The man's ridiculous statement bothers me terribly also. Some children don't have a chance because they have parents who use poor judgement. Children believe in their parents. Parents are the first teachers. When parents give wrong advice, children have no way of knowing the advice given is not what's right. By the time they realize they have been misinformed, it's too late. A bad habit has already been adapted.

This is where teaching children early in school about the dangers of drugs is helpful and so needed. With a junkie for a mother, and a misleading father, it will be a miracle that they do well. However, there still may be hope. Sometimes people have a natural inner sense that tells them not to destroy their lives and that one day, they can move away from their present surroundings and succeed.

Do not consider your conversation with this man as a failure. He may later give thought to what you were trying to convey, and change his way of thinking.

There are so many children, as well as adults, who need your advice. Don't give up the crusade. Wherever you can, whenever you can, help them to say "no."

If you have a question for Gwendolyn Baines please send letters to: The Charlotte Post, 1531 Camden Road, Charlotte, N.C., 28230

Features

Around Charlotte 10A
Church News 13A
Sunday School 12A



Lawbreakers now are becoming younger

By Gina Holland
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mississippi lawmakers have begun anew to stop juvenile crime, but any progress in 1996 will be despite some pretty formidable obstacles ranging from a cash shortage to some pessimism.

Both the House and Senate have set up permanent committees to handle juvenile justice matters.

If it will be a fumbling mess or a smashing success depends mostly on Sen. Rob Smith, D-Richland, and Rep. Joe Warren, D-Mount Olive, the committee chairmen.

The problem is obvious. Criminals are getting younger. Kids as young as 6 and 8 have been caught committing burglaries and stealing cars. Youth Courts officials are at wit's end.

The past two years lawmak-

ers have tinkered with the issue, approving mostly punitive measures designed to lock up young lawbreakers.

The first move of 1996 came last week at the initial meeting of Smith's committee. He went to the source of the problem, bringing in troubled youngsters to discuss solutions.

A 9-year-old girl with a yellow ribbon holding up her ponytail described the "dope

dealers" she has had to dodge getting home from school. What got this tiny, sweet-looking girl in trouble, some wondered. She brought a hammer to school, they were told.

Some of the teens were bitter, blaming adults for not paying them any attention. Some even felt lawmakers at the meeting were not really listening.

The stories of poverty and parentless-childhoods were

poignant.

Gov. Kirk Fordice left the session even more convinced the problem is too big for the legislature. He said the solution will take "a national change of heart" despite lawmakers who "sit all day long in government committees and talk about this problem."

Fordice is on target about the committees. Lawmakers are too quick to appoint study

See JUVENILE page 10A

CREATIVE DISCIPLINE

Parent finds another way to punish son

By Andrea R. Richards
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Many parents find themselves between a rock and a hard place when it comes to correcting a child's behavior.

They often face the dilemma of how to effectively discipline their children without wasting the child's time.

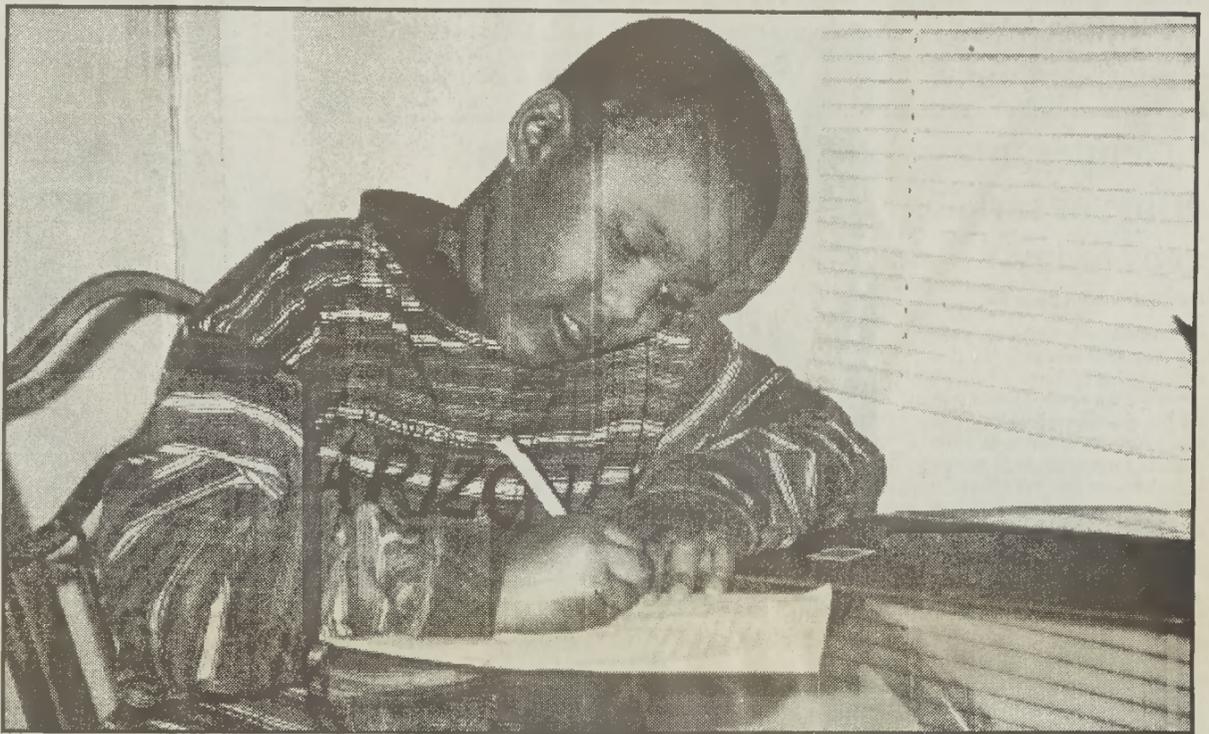
Joe Brown, the father of a 7-year-old boy, found himself in this situation. Brown isn't opposed to spanking or taking away video games from his son. Because these methods don't teach a child anything, Brown chooses other disciplinary actions.

"I think you give them school work instead of other forms of punishment because school work only helps them out in their learning and education," the single father said. "Knowing what we've got to face tomorrow as children of the black culture education should be the main thing that anyone should try to establish within their kids. Without education, we're nothing."

When his son, Shomari Martemus-Brown, acts disrespectful, Joe Brown doesn't just send him to his room. Shomari goes with a book or pencil in hand. Brown assigns Shomari four pages to read or makes him write an essay on any given subject if Shomari deliberately does something wrong.

If Shomari sees any word that he is unfamiliar with, then he must write the word down, look it up in the dictionary to learn the correct pronunciation and/or meaning.

"Another form of punish-



ment is to let him write a full page essay on why he thinks education is important," Brown said.

"As a black man, knowing what I'm faced with today, I think the best thing for me to do is give my kid education and make education the most important thing in his life."

—Joe Brown

Brown got the idea from a sister who lives in Ohio. He believes telling his son to read or write as a form of punishment will be more beneficial to his son as opposed to turning off the television.

"As the world is going on today, you just know that



Shomari Martemus-Brown and his father Joe Brown work on school work together. Brown, a single parent, uses homework and study to discipline his son. Photos/Andrea Richards

somebody is not teaching their kid anything," he said. "You just got to stay on top of that because if don't have anything, you've got an education. At least you've got a start. If

you don't have an education, then you can just through the towel in.

"As a black man, knowing what I'm faced with today, I think the best thing for me to do is give my kid education

and make education the most important thing in his life," Brown said.

Shomari, a second-grader at Merry Oaks Elementary School, prefers reading and writing more than spankings.

"I didn't want to do it but I knew I had to."

The telephone book and newspapers are other tools to creatively "punish" your child.

•Have your child look through the yellow pages, select a business ad write a clever ad.

•Give your child a list of your friend's names to look up in the white pages.

•Tell your child to read a short editorial in the newspaper and to underline all the facts with a green pencil and all the opinions with an orange pencil.

•Clip pictures out of the newspaper and have your child tell you about the picture or write a list of adjectives that describe the picture.

Your weekly horoscope

ARIES: (March 21-April 20)

Use all of the resources available to you. A family argument may take some extra attention to straighten out, with no serious fallout. You may need to make some choices - between spending more quality time with family and friends, or advancing at work.

TAURUS: (April 21 - May 21) There seems to be some apparent conflict, but it is of a healthy variety, and may yield some unexpected benefits in the form of totally new approaches to routine situations. Don't make hasty decisions regarding financial matters until you know the whole story.

GEMINI: (May 22 - June 21) You and your significant other may make a wonderful connection and the sense that you are growing closer will

bring both of you joy. Success will be yours, even if it is of a low-key nature. You know you've made great strides, and soon the right people will notice.

CANCER: (June 22 - July 23) Try to take it easy this week. You have been going at a frantic pace, and it will start to catch up with you. Decisions made hastily may be flawed, so put off action until you have all the facts. Treat yourself to something special, and maybe something a little frivolous.

LEO: (July 24 - August 23) You will get ahead by working hard. Nothing less than your reputation is at stake, but no need to worry since your work is usually above reproach. Expect a little bit of a delay, because soon you'll be riding on the crest of success. The spotlight is yours, you deserve it.

VIRGO: (August 24 - September 23) Prosperity is

an issue, so instead of whining, take action. Work a little harder and you'll be surprised at the financial results. A surge of inspiration will enable you to get through any potentially rough situations - clear all avenues of communication.

LIBRA: (September 24 - October 23) Use your clout to get some new and different changes off the ground at work. Friends and co-workers can really come in handy now. You're working for no less than the greater good of all involved - remember this. Don't be taken in by careless flirting with someone new.

SCORPIO: (October 24 - November 22) Keeping your nose to the grindstone is admirable to a point, but you might make a better impression with superiors if your approach is more balanced. Learn to give some responsibilities to others if you are inter-

ested in a management position.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 23 - December 21) You tend to keep your emotional distress to yourself, and this might not be for the best. Allow someone close to penetrate your defenses. Your beauty comes from within, and creates a glow that is obvious to others around you. Make plans carefully to assure a positive outcome.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 - January 20) A little contemplation will get your week off on a calm and clear path. You are pleased with the results up until now, but do want to improve your work. Allow troublesome obstacles to dissolve themselves. You can't hasten this process by hovering and worrying needlessly.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 - February 19) Is your current relationship a little unbal-

anced? If so, playing the role too faithfully can bring resentment and boredom. Maybe a planned weekend pleasure trip is just what the doctor ordered. One or both of you may need to learn something new. Make peace with inevitable changes.

PISCES: (February 20 - March 20) When working on your financial plan for the future, avoid putting all your eggs in one basket. Anything which looks definite may not be beneficial in the end. Diversify investments and don't expect to get rich overnight. Any health problems are probably from neglect.

IF THIS WEEK IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Catch up on correspondence with friends. Be wary though, encounters with others may end in emotional outbursts, which may leave you a bit bewildered. You may feel that you are constantly at battle with your significant other, which leads you nowhere.