



Dear HoG: Parenting Resources

Horizons in Hemophilia, Winter 2009

Dear HoG:

I'm worried about my sister. She has two little boys with hemophilia and sometimes the stress of being a parent really gets to her. I hate to see her lose her cool. But I know that having two active boys is challenging enough. On top of that she has to argue with them sometimes about taking factor in the mornings so they'll get to school on time. Her heart's in the right place, but sometimes she threatens to give them beatings. She has never actually done it and I want to make sure she never does! Can you give me some advice that I can share with her?

--Worried

Dear Worried:

Thank you for caring enough to ask about your sister and two nephews. Even good parents sometimes do things they regret later and you are smart to be thinking about prevention. One of the biggest causes of child abuse, in addition to parental stress, is an unrealistic expectation of how children should be able to view and cope with the world. Children are not miniature adults. Their developing brains don't have the ability to reason like adults or experience empathy for their parents' point of view. Children often are overwhelmed by their own feelings and don't have a clue what adults are going through! But parents often make the mistake of taking their behaviors too personally and feeling victimized. That's when it's tempting to lash out. The good news is that there is a great resource in this state called Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. The toll-free number is 1-800-Children (244-5373).

Tell your sister not to be put off by the name. Nobody there is interested in labeling her as a child-abuser. What they really want to do is help. They can give her some guidance about getting support and new skills that that will keep everyone safe.

If you and your sister have access to the Internet, you can check out their website at www.preventchildabusega.org. Click on "prevention services and programs." There you will find information about parent support programs, parenting classes, a hotline number and many other services.

Of course, if you think your nephews are in immediate danger, it is important to immediately call the police or the Department of Family and Children's Services in your sister's county.