

Centsible parenting

▶ A newsletter for parents of fifth grade children ▲

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Jake and his family are eating supper when Jake says, "I used this week's allowance to buy baseball cards. But I already had most of them so now I don't have any new cards and no money to go to the movie tomorrow night. Can you give me some more money?"

(See end of newsletter for a possible answer.)

The topic of allowances is an on-going debate. Some parents believe in paying their children for work they do. Other parents think children are entitled to a share of the family income. Whichever approach you take, an allowance is one way for children to get money.

An allowance introduces a child to:

- the idea of a fixed income
- having to make choices
- living with the consequences

GIVING AN ALLOWANCE

When deciding on the amount of allowance for your child, you will need to consider the child's age, maturity level, responsibilities, and the

family's financial situation. Certainly you will want to talk to your child about:

- what expenses the allowance covers
- how much the allowance will be
- how often the allowance will be paid
- how often the allowance can be reviewed
- how to handle expensive purchases
- when an allowance might be discontinued



TYING TO CHORES

It is tempting to use an allowance as a means to get your child to help out around the house. This is probably not a good idea and can teach the wrong lesson.

Remember, a child gets an allowance to learn how to handle money. Ideally the allowance is large enough to cover some basic needs, includes some extra for saving and spending, and is small enough to require choices.

A child helps out around the house because he or she is a member of the family. A child can be expected to do chores consistent with age and abilities.

By keeping allowances and chores separate, your child is learning people have some responsibilities to fulfill without being paid.

DOING A WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these words (all are on page one), which have to do with allowances.

1. g i n v a s _____
2. h e c s o r _____
3. i s e i n o r e b i s l p t s i _____
4. e o n i c m _____
5. g a e _____
6. c o s e c h i _____
7. l a l e o c n a w _____
8. p n g e d s i n _____
9. q e n c e n s o u s e c _____
10. s x e n s p e e _____

Answers:

1 - saving; 2 - chores; 3 - responsibilities; 4 - income; 5 - age; 6 - choices; 7 - allowance; 8 - spending; 9 - consequences; 10 - expenses

CONSIDER THIS

Mom says, "Jake, I'm sorry you weren't happy with your baseball cards. But that's what you chose to spend your allowance on. Maybe next week you might buy only a couple of packs of cards; then you would have enough money left to do something else. Dad and I are planning to rent a movie tomorrow night. You're welcome to join us in watching it if you'd like."

COMING IN DECEMBER: MAKING DECISIONS AND SPENDING

Prepared by Donna K. Donald, family life field specialist, and edited by Laura Sternweis, communication specialist, Iowa State University Extension.

... and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

This newsletter is published for families with fifth grade children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.