

Family Council

Editors Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a woman's editor, and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors. (Copyright 1963—General Features Corp.)

Joseph U. - We're too old for a baby-sitter.
Mrs. W. U. - It gives me peace of mind to hire one.

Joseph U. - I'm 14, and I have a sister of 11 and a brother of six. I certainly feel silly having a baby-sitter in charge of me when my parents go out. I keep telling them that I can take care of all three of us, and I'll do it for nothing, or for whatever they want to pay me.

My mother hires anyone she can get and sometimes it's a high school kid who's not much older than I. To make things worse, she plans to work in my father's dress shop during the Easter rush, and she wants us to go to our aunt's home after school instead of to our own.

I'd like to know why she doesn't trust me to take charge.

Mrs. W. U. - I wish Joe could understand that I trust him, but I don't trust the unknown. I'd worry about him and the others unless I knew where they were, who was taking care of them, and how to reach them at all times.

I don't want to frighten him with a mother's reasons, but I see many dangers in leaving youngsters unsupervised. And I don't like the idea of putting an older child in charge of the younger ones. They consider him bossy, resent him, and give him a hard time. He can't possibly have the judgment or wisdom of an experienced sitter. There's more to taking charge than Joe realizes.

The Council - Some readers will undoubtedly cite a 14-year-old on the family tree who, at that tender age, was out supporting himself, keeping house for a motherless home and performing other emergency feats. But this was not necessarily good. It was just necessary.

In Joe's instance, there's no necessity for such bravado showing of capability. And certainly, in a pinch, his parents would leave the house and siblings to his teen-age tender care.

Here, however, there are alternatives and Mrs. U. chooses to use them and we second the move. While she trusts Joe's ability to hold the four walls together and guard life - and - limb, she wants to be sure of a bit more in her absence. Will homework be done? Will TV run overtime? Will a well-balanced meal be served and consumed? And if kid brother or kid sister acts up, will a cool judgment be exercised by a veritable King Solomon of a sitter? Also, would a sudden fever or a rash mean anything to, even be recognized by, a preoccupied fellow like Joe? He should be glad that the responsibility for so many decisions, some of them split-second ones, is not left with him too soon or too often.

But we catch what's behind Joe's gripe. It's being "lumped" with the others. A 14-year-old boy wants some recognition that he's no longer just one of "the kids."

Our advice to Mrs. U., then, is to find ways to enhance his prestige both at home, in front of the younger children and the official baby-sitter, and a broad, at the aunt's home where he and the others will park during Mama's work stint. Perhaps he can do some marketing for his aunt. Or make the chocolate pudding for the supper dessert.

We'd also hope that Mrs. U. doesn't hire "anyone she can get," but rather the expert, motherly type who can demonstrate to Joe that being adult and being bossy are not synonymous. Being friendly but firm comes closer.

Huge Titan Rocket Fired Successfully

Cape Canaveral - (UPI) - A mighty Titan-2 rocket carrying the largest nose cone ever built for a U.S. military missile Thursday soared more than 6,700 miles across the Atlantic ocean.

The 103-foot Titan-2, America's most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile, blasted from its launching pad at 10:23 a.m.

Within about 30 minutes, the giant nose cone—twice as heavy as any other in the country's growing arsenal of ballistic weapons—dived back through earth's atmosphere into a target area off the west coast of South Africa.

Salem - (UPI) - Bids for construction of the Astoria bridge steel superstructure will be opened here April 23, the state highway commission has announced.

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