



## THE FAMILY JEOPARDY QUIZ

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Over my many years of parenting I have noticed that many phrases are repeated so frequently that they become like an unconscious response or mantra. For fun, test your knowledge of current parent/child mantras arranged according to the different stages of parenting. These are organized in “Jeopardy style”. The answers come first. You guess the question that prompted it. (See answers below.)

**Parent Mantras:** (You come up with the preceding question.)

Age 0-1: “What a good baby!”

Age 2-4: “Because I am the parent!” (This is a newer version of the old “Because I said so!” comeback. Although many modern parents have sworn never to use this with their children, if they avoided it during the 2-4 age range, they often wearily fall back on it by the pre-teen years.)

Age 5-8: “Not until you’ve finished your dinner (homework, cleaning...)” or “Have you been invited?”

Age 9-12 for boys: “At least once a week, whether you need it or not.” Or for either: “Because it’s not appropriate for school (your age, church...)”

Age 13-15: “Well, I’m not everybody’s parent!”

Age 16-18: “It’s not a matter of trust.”

Age 19-21: “Because I’m still paying the bills.”

Adult children who have children: “If there’s ever an emergency, sure, but we’ve already done our time.”

Of course this works both ways. Following are some automatic phrases from the mouths of our children.

**Youth Mantras:**

Age 2-4: “Why? (always said with a high whine) I’m not hungry (cold, tired) I hate you!” or “I ‘wuv’ you, you’re the best mommy (daddy) in the world!”

Age 5-8: “I’m not running!”

Age 9-12: “But this is the furthest I’ve ever gotten!”

Age 13-15: “Because it’s boring and I don’t like the music.”

Age 16-18: “Look, I can take care of myself.”

Age 19-21: “But I don’t have a curfew at college!”

Ageless: “I forgot.”

## ANSWERS

### Questions preceding parent's mantras:

Age 0-2: (non-verbal) Statement is generally in response to a peacefully sleeping baby

Age 2-4: "Why can't I stay up, run out into the street, scream, eat dessert first, paint the house..."  
(These questions only qualify when there is a list of at least 5 why's repeated in rapid succession. Otherwise, the parent might come up with a plausible explanation.)

Age 5-8: "Can I go play with (insert best friend's name?)" or "Can I stay overnight at (insert best friend's name) house?"

Age 9-12: "Why do I have to take a bath tonight? I'm not dirty!" or "Why can't I wear athletic shorts?"

Age 13-15: "But everybody else's parents let them stay out 'til midnight (buy super expensive sneakers, let them watch *The Mind Numbing Violence and Perverted Sex Show* on TV)"

Age 16-18: "I don't understand why you don't trust me to drive over 500 miles in a 1980 convertible in a snowstorm with my girlfriend to a destination that we're not sure of yet."

Age 19-21: "Why do you care what grades I get in college (when I come in at night, if I'm going to be home for dinner...)"

Adult children who have children: "Hey, Mom, can you watch the kids next week so we can take a ski vacation?"

### Statements preceding children's mantras:

Age 2-4: "Finish your dinner (put on your jacket, it's time for bed...)" or "Want to play a game together (go out for ice cream, stay up late...)"

Age 5-8: Said in response to "Stop that running!" (The child retorts that he/she was only "skipping" or "sliding")

Age 9-12: "It's time to turn off the video game." (Obligatory parental comeback is always "I don't care if this is the furthest you've ever gotten.")

Age 13-15: "Why don't you want to go to church?"

Age 16-18: "Remember you can always call and we'll pick you up if things get out of hand."

Age 19-21: "We expect you home at a reasonable hour. If it's after 1 a.m., call and let us know so we won't worry."