

Sure, some can, but that doesn't mean the should all be doing it," Blaustein says.

When your child acts defiantly chopping o her hair, answering only to "Shirley"—a parent's instinct may be to home in on the behavior rather than the reason behind it. "In most cases, the behavior is usually just your child's attempt at solving a problem," says Brad Sachs, Ph.D., a family psychologist in Columbia, Maryland, and the author of *The Good Enough Child* (Harper Paperbacks, \$15). "It is the best solution she's come up with." Instead of lashing out over the haircut, ask probing questions that get to the heart of how she's feeling. Maybe self-esteem is the issue, not an urge for a bob.

"If your child talks about being bullied, don't immediately become the lioness, ready to confront the other child's parents. Let your child tell the story and simply say, 'Whoa!' or 'Wow!'" says Wendy Mogel, a psychologist and the author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* (Penguin, \$14). Then ask what Psychologists Say



"Eighty percent of sun damage occurs before the age of 18," says Jody Levine, a pediatric dermatologist in New York City. Later in life, it shows up as wrinkles and skin cancer. "Apply sunscreen during your morning routine. It doesn't have to be sunny for people to wear sunscreen, as damaging rays are always shining, even through window glass," she says.

"Make kids eat a real breakfast, not a sweet breakfast," says Judy Bearman, the nurse at St. Mary's Episcopal School, in Memphis. "The simple carbohydrates in doughnuts, strudels, and juice enter the bloodstream quickly, giving them energy but leaving them groggy by 9 A.M. I see so many stomachaches in my o ce mid-morning, and the kids are just hungry" Ideally, children should get protein (like a scrambled egg) and some fat (at least 2 percent milk) to keep them full until lunch.

When it comes to possibly unpleasant situations, like getting a shot or pulling a tooth, "give children only as much information as they can handle," says Hope Zimmerman Waxman, a pediatric dentist in New York City "Kids get anxious when you present too much detail. We might say, 'You have to come back to wash a tooth' or, of a shot, 'It's like a mosquito bite.'"



Don't compare your kid with Chatty Cathy. "Many parents come in and say, 'All of my friends' children are speaking,' and worry because theirs aren't," says Steven Blaustein, Ph.D., a speech and language pathologist in Neyn, P 1