Greenville Daily News 09/14/2015 Page A07

ASK AMY

For this mom, immunization must precede invitation

Dear Amy: I have four young children. The oldest (twins) just started school.

We know some people who cannot vaccinate their children for health reasons. But we also know of others who choose not to vaccinate their children.

We are all about being inclusive and we love to entertain other children, but I don't want parents to bring their kids to our house if they have chosen not to vaccinate. Children who can't be vaccinated for health reasons are welcome.

As a registered nurse who works with young babies I feel very strongly about this. I have seen the tragic results of children contracting preventable diseases.

To be honest, I don't know if I want my kids to associate with the children of parents who "think they know better."

I thought about putting a note to parents on invitations asking children who have not been vaccinated by choice to please not attend, but I don't know if that is appropriate and can't figure out the wording.

Is it OK to post this warning on invitations? — Pro-Vax RN

Dear Pro-Vax: You categorize children into three groups: Vaccinated, unvaccinated due to presumed underlying health issues or because of age, and unvaccinated by parents' choice, (so-called "anti-vaxxers").

As an RN, you are very aware of the potential health issues for unvaccinated children, by catching and/or spreading disease. You frame this as an intention to protect these children, but isn't this their parents' job? Shouldn't they be the ones inquiring into the vaccination status of others?

You are being disingenuous to present this as a health issue when actually you simply don't want to welcome children whose parents are either ignorant and/or disagree with you on this important topic.

It is your right to deny children access to your home, but don't send invitations to children and then tell them on the invitation that they might not be welcome. Deal with parents privately. But be aware that when you place your family in a bubble — only admitting others who already think and act as you do — you are not the inclusive person you claim to be.

Even though I am staunchly Team Vax and strongly urge all parents to vaccinate their children, if you asked me about my child's immunization status as a test to determine what kind of person I am, I would respond that it was none of your business — unless you demonstrated a legitimate health-related need to know.

Dear Amy: I'm a grown woman with one sibling. For the past five years or so, our mother has been giving my sister newly purchased items for birthdays and Christmas, but gives me either something she's no longer using/wearing or something she's found at the thrift shop — and she always makes sure to tell me how little she spent on me.

I learned today that she's been mailing gifts (new, store-bought) to my sister throughout the year (even though my sister can easily afford to buy her own things).

This is not a source of contention between my sister and me. We both think this behavior is beyond the pale, but it has left me feeling like my mother is communicating that she cares less about me than she does my sibling.

Can I ask her why she's doing this? I don't want to appear ungrateful, but I am hurt, confused and wondering if she is mentally ill. — Apparently Not the Favorite

Dear Not: Definitely bring this up with your mother. Ask her, "Are you aware that you are doing this?" and, "What message are you trying to send to each of us?"

You are wise to see this behavior as a reflection of your mother, not your sister. Don't let this affect your relationship with each other.

Send questions via e-mail to askamy@tribune.com or by mail to Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.

© 2015, The Chicago Tribune