

Parenting PEOPLES

Vicki Lawrence

This Mama's Got a Line on Teens

You can stop patting yourself on the back for making it through another day with your preschooler. Those “Parent of the Year” awards should only go to those who have survived teenagers, says Vicki Lawrence, mother of Courtney, 17 and Garrett, 15. Only then do you know you “made it through the minefield in one piece.” Looking back, she finds diapers and feeding schedules are easy. “It’s hard when they’re playing with your mind.”

Although her daughter just graduated from high school, Lawrence will never forget when 5-year-old Courtney asked her what the “F” word means. Lawrence told her. “Tell kids exactly what they want to know or [if they think you’re uncomfortable with certain subjects] they’ll never come back to you for answers later.” She advises parents not to worry about saying too much because kids seem to absorb only what they can handle. They’ll come back later for clarifications—and that’s exactly what you want them to do.

“Don’t lose the communication or somewhere along the road you take a left and they take a right and you never come together again.”

—Vivien Santana Hughes

