



## Teasing and Bullying on the School Yard

...continued from newsletter

Parents of a child with a facial difference go through many different stages of emotions a main one being whether or not their child is going to be accepted by society. The first step is not to worry about what society thinks of your child, but coming to accept their condition and not let it change your perception of whom they are and what they mean to you. Your child needs the security in knowing that they'll always have your support in the end because you're the person they look up to the most.

### Why kids tease in the first place?

Most often kids will tease one another over their visible appearance because it's the easiest target for them to zone in on. A lot of kids bully because they:

- don't know how to get along well with others
- they're the result of someone bullying them in the past
- they want to keep their "tough guy" reputation
- they want to be in control of their environment therefore, they control others around them.

Parents have a huge role in the way their child copes with teasing and bullying and it starts with their reaction. The moment your child witnesses how you react to a certain situation makes or breaks their judgment of any situation that they may encounter on their own. It's important to sit down with your child and coping techniques if ever they were put in a difficult position. Having a plan of action will give them something to fall back on if they ever need it, and will also allow them to take control of their own lives.

### When to know if teasing has turned into bullying?



Usually when a child is being teased at school bullying isn't too far around the corner. They are two things that are closely linked together and both have a negative impact on child's self-esteem. Bullying is the next stage of teasing, but is a lot more dangerous because your child's safety could be in harms way. The moment your child ever experiences the slightest bit of bullying, whether it's a forced nudge to the arm or being shoved to the ground be sure to report it to the school. Bullying is something that cannot be taken lightly, someone always ends up getting hurt. Many schools have a zero tolerance on bullying so action will be taken.

### Talking to other kids about your facial difference?

It's really important that your child has the accurate information on his/her condition in order to share details with inquiring minds. Being able to talk openly about their condition is one of



the ways to help eliminate any teasing on the school ground. It shows a sense of strength and maturity on their part and closes the door on any opportunities of being teased. Having the confidence to be able to tell someone about their condition will only benefit them in the end and help them better understand and accept their difference. A simple “I was born this way” could eliminate unnecessary grief.

AboutFace offers the school program Facing Differences an educational program designed to help children ages 8 - 12 talk about differences and change attitudes in the school community. It teaches children at a young age about diversity issues within their classroom. The program works to increase awareness and acceptance of students with any physical differences.

For more resources or information on teasing and bullying, or to order a copy of Facing Differences, please visit our website at [www.aboutface.ca](http://www.aboutface.ca) or click [HERE](#) for the order form.