



A B O U T F A C E

A PARENT'S GUIDE: HINTS IN BUILDING/ENHANCING SELF ESTEEM

1. The condition should not define the child.
2. Acknowledge the child's feelings about a teasing experience, rather than putting down the teaser.
3. Discipline your child with a difference as any other child. All children need structure and boundaries to learn responsibility for their own actions.
4. Connecting with other children with differences in social gatherings or support groups exposes the child to others with similar experiences.
5. Focus on specific skills to assist the child:
 - a) Social skills
 - Starting a conversation
 - How to ask someone to play
 - How to decline or accept an invitation
 - b) Physical
 - encourage good grooming habits
 - Peer accepted clothing
 - c) Expressing oneself
 - Encourage your child to write about experiences
 - Expose the child to different ways of self-expression, i.e. music, art, dance
6. Be honest and open with your child. Use age appropriate language and concepts, use factual information about his/her condition, and be honest about what is going to happen at each medical appointment.
7. If your child is having school problems, try to sort out if they are related to issues that may have nothing to do with that fact that they have a facial difference. If, as a parent you are feeling confused, talk to a professional or another parent to get some feedback.
8. Take some initiative to inform your child's teacher if there are any issues at school related to the child's condition.
9. Help your child to understand that everyone has struggles in their life of some nature. All individuals need to learn coping strategies for dealing with stress and problem times.
10. Be certain that your child's teacher is not holding back from challenging your child towards his/her potential out of their lack of understanding.

AboutFace is a national charitable organization dedicated to helping individuals with facial differences and their families. We support individuals whose differences are present at birth or acquired as a result of disease or trauma. If you or someone you know has a facial difference and would like more information, contact AboutFace at 1-800- 665-FACE or www.aboutface.ca.

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