

*Does your child complain that someone in the neighborhood or school is hurting his/her feelings? Is this name calling causing stress for your child? Perhaps your child no longer wants to go to school due to someone teasing him/her in class or at recess. Parents cannot always protect their children from these hurtful situations, but they can help them learn strategies to protect children from these hurtful situations and help them deal with the teasing.*

*Good humored/playing teasing causes everyone to smile or laugh, including the "teasee". But hurtful/cruel teasing is when one person makes fun of another. This would include put-downs, name-calling, ridiculing, bullying, taunting, and annoying actions. Sometimes, teasing that is intended to be good humored/playful teasing is interpreted as hurtful.*

### *WHAT ARE KIDS TEASED ABOUT?*

*Kids are teased about a variety of things. These include:*

- \*what they do*
- \*what they believe*
- \*what they have/don't have*
- \*what they wear*
- \*what they say*
- \*how they act*
- \*how they perform in school*
- \*how they talk*
- \*how they walk*
- \*their weight*
- \*their height*
- \*if they wear braces*
- \*if they wear glasses*
- \*if they have scars*
- \*their grades*
- \*their hair*
- \*their family*
- \*their culture*
- \*a learning disability*
- \*any difference*

### *STRATEGIES FOR EASING THE TEASING*

*Children can ease the feeling of helplessness by learning strategies to help them in teasing situations. The following strategies come from Judy Freedman's site "Easing*

*the Teasing."*

### **IGNORE**

*It is often quite effective for children to ignore the teaser. Children should not respond to the teaser, and, if possible, walk away and join others. This is not an easy thing to do. Ignoring requires much practice and repetition, especially with young children. Parents can role-play with their children to strengthen their skills.*

### **"I-STATEMENTS"**

*With "I-Statements", children express how they feel, what has caused them to feel that way, and what they would like others to do differently. This is an assertive way for children to express their feelings effectively. For example, a child could say "I feel upset when you make fun of my glasses. I would like you to stop." This works best when expressed in a structured situation, such as a classroom. When used in unstructured situations, such as a playground, it might lead to more teasing. As with ignoring, this requires practice at home.*

### **ACCEPT THE TEASE AS IF IT IS A COMPLIMENT**

*Teaching children to turn a tease into a compliment is an effective strategy against teasing. For example, if a child is teased about glasses and is called "Four-eyes", the child can politely respond, "Thanks for noticing my glasses." This will also require rehearsal at home. It might help to brainstorm ideas and responses to prepare for the teasing situations.*

*These are just a few examples of how to "ease the tease". Log on to the sites below for some additional helpful ideas.*

### **Easing the Teasing**

This is a great site by Judy Freedman on helpful strategies on teasing for children.

### **India Parenting**

Another site with helpful teasing strategies.