



4-H School-Age Child Care
University of California Cooperative Extension

PARENT STYLES

Tips for Busy Parents

ARE YOU KIDDING???

What to do with the teasing child

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Webster's Dictionary defines "teasing" as: "to annoy a person by making him or it the victim of irritating remarks or actions repeated time and time again."

Why do children tease?

Teasing among children is an inevitable part of childhood. School-age children take everything literally. They believe if someone calls them a name, like "dummy", that means they are dumb. They have not developed enough self-confidence and self-identity to be secure in who they are. It is so commonplace that, most of the time, no one really pays any attention to it. However teasing contributes to or causes a multitude of problems.

Some children can laugh off mild teasing or can give a quick verbal return. Others are more sensitive and become hurt and are unable to shrug it off. Often children become the brunt of teasing from other children.

How can parents control teasing?

- ☆ **Discuss differences as normal.** Emphasize the value and individual traits of each and every person. This helps to build self-esteem and a better self-concept.

- ☆ **Recognize that teasing is a form of attention-getting behavior.**

Look for ways to provide positive attention without reinforcing the teasing behavior.

- ☆ **Discuss the negative aspects of teasing with your child.** Talk about how it feels to be teased, why people do it, when it is fun and when it is harmful. Role play different situations and possible solutions with your child.

- ☆ **Make your child aware of your rules regarding teasing and name calling.** Communicate your feelings about teasing. Remember, it is important that you set a good example by your behavior and actions.

- ☆ **Isolate teaser and teased.** Give them an activity to do together. This will allow them time to talk it over and to work cooperatively on a project.

Most of all, be aware that teasing can be hurtful and, by working with the children involved, you can turn the situation around.

Resource: School-Age Notes, Nov/Dec 1984

Spin Some Attention

What You'll Need:

- Empty soft drink bottle
- Straws



What To Do:

- ☆ Ask the “teaser” and the “teased” children to sit in a circle on the floor.
- ☆ Explain that they will take turns spinning the bottle. Draw straws to see who goes first.
- ☆ When the first child spins and the bottle points at the second child, the “spinner” has to say something good to that person and vice -versa.
- ☆ This is a good way for children to say things like:
 - “Thanks for sticking up for me in school.”
 - “I’m glad you’re my brother.”
 - “I didn’t really mean what I said to you. I won’t say it again.”
 - “Thanks for sharing your toys with me.”
 - “I really enjoy playing games together.”
 - “It was nice of you to loan me your new sweater.”