**Two Sides to Every Story**

No doubt there have been times when your child has arrived home from school describing the mistreatment he/she received from another child. Although *rare*, there may be incidents in which your son/daughter is truthfully sharing such details. Please note that such occurrences are rare. It is human nature to present oneself in the best possible light.

When complaining about conflicts or mistreatment kids often present their sides in the following ways:

1. They are completely innocent. “I didn’t do anything.”
2. They minimize their intentions or actions. “I was only joking.” “I called him a name, but he kicked me.”
3. They justify their choices. “I think I told her that she isn’t my friend anymore because she didn’t pick me for her team. Then she shoved me and I *may* have shoved her back. *I don’t remember.*”

In addition to these, children frequently exaggerate what the other kids did or they simply overreact to others’ comments or actions. Many children keep a mental record of past hurts which, when recalled, intensifies the feelings about the current situation.

While discussing conflicts with your child you may obtain a clearer picture of what happened by asking the following questions and insisting upon answers.

1. What was going on prior to this?
2. What did you say or do?
3. Do you really think he/she did this on purpose?
4. Have you had difficulties with this person before?
It is quite common for kids to change their stories as adults, at home and at school, explore and confront their contributions to conflicts. Sometimes we are fortunate to reach what we think is probably the truth. Oftentimes despite our best efforts we are never able to untangle the stories and the truth remains covered. As adults we may then conclude that more than enough time has been spent investigating and discussing situations which most likely will remain unresolved.

The next time your child shares a troublesome incident, please remember that there are usually two sides to the story. If you ask the right questions you might, in the end, decide that it is not necessary to continue the discussion or to involve anyone else.