

# Bullying: Worse than the Disability

Alejandra Mora Gonzalez

**BEFORE YOU READ:** What is *bullying*?

## Challenges in my Childhood

I grew up with a disability, and many times I felt bad. I asked myself, “Why is this happening to me?” There was something else that was hard for me: During my childhood, I lived in Mexico with my grandparents. My mom was in the U.S., and my dad was not part of my life. I have many good memories of my time with my grandparents, but it was also difficult. I missed my parents.

When I was three years old, the doctors discovered that I had a vision problem and a problem with my legs. The vision problem is called *strabismus*. I have been wearing glasses since I was three years old. It is very expensive, and I’m afraid I will need surgery. The problem with my legs is that one leg is shorter than the other. I started walking when I was about 18 months old. I could not walk well. I sometimes walked on my *tiptoes*. I often fell when I walked.

The doctors decided to operate on both my legs when I was four years old. The surgery worked well for my left leg but not my right leg. When I was nine years old, the doctor tried the surgery again. My leg improved a little, but I still walked badly. Now, I have terrible pain. I need to take medications to help with the pain.

## Kids Laughed at Me

In school, the kids were rude to me. They laughed at me because I was wearing glasses and because I wore special shoes. They saw that I could not walk normally. Also, kids *bullied* me because they knew my *biological father* was not in my life, and my mother had left me to go work in the U.S.

## Moving to the U.S.

Finally, I came to the U.S. to live with my mom and her husband, who has been a wonderful

*stepfather* to me. In the U.S., I got more medical care. It turns out, the real problem was in my head because I have a tumor. Now the tumor is controlled.

Every year my doctor gives me an MRI. The doctor says it wasn’t necessary for me to have surgery. The surgeries gave me permanent damage. In my right leg, they cut my tendon. Now I need to do one more surgery to repair the tendon. But this surgery is expensive and I am afraid to do it.



## Be Nice and Gentle with all People

I suffered a lot from my disabilities, but the worst suffering came from *bullying*. I didn’t understand why other kids treated me badly. I was just like any other kid. I wanted to have friends and a happy childhood.

Now that I’m an adult, I see that those children weren’t bad. Their parents probably didn’t teach them to be respectful. People should learn to show respect to all people. When someone has a disability, *we need to put ourselves in their shoes*.

**AFTER YOU READ:**

1. Describe the challenges Alejandra faced as a child. Cite evidence from the text.
2. Note the words and phrases in *bold*. Use context clues to determine the meaning. Try writing your own sentences using those words.

Alejandra Mora Gonzalez is an ESOL student at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. She’s 28 years old and a single mom. Alejandra is focused on the present and trying to get the best future for herself and her daughter.