

## PEER AWARENESS AND THE CHILD WITH NEUROFIBROMATOSIS TYPE 1 (Nf1)

Every child is different and the child who has Nf1 is no exception. They all have different strengths and weaknesses and it's important that their peers understand and accept them.

This may involve talks to the whole school or just the child's class or year. This could be done through assemblies or special events.

It's not always necessary to identify the individual child unless that child and their parents would prefer it to be specific. However, the outcome is more favourable when specific.

Allow the Nf1 child's peer group to consider:

- Everyone is different
- Why some people behave differently
- What social / communication difficulties to expect
- People who think in a different way
- How best to help and support

Many Nf1 children respond well to having a buddy in school. The buddy could be a senior pupil, or a classmate, who can provide support at break times. A buddy can help the Nf1 child to understand the "unwritten rules" of the playground. Explaining how and when to join in the games going on and perhaps initiate some games where others can join them.

It's possible the Nf1 child could become possessive of his/ her buddy and therefore it may be best to work on a rotating basis with two or three different buddies.

Having a circle of friends can also help the Nf1 child gain wider support and understanding.

Funny Lumps has Power Point Presentations, as well as teacher notes, which may be useful.