

# Skeptical Kids

There's a phenomenon I've noticed with kids. When I tell them something they didn't already know, they often respond with "*No!*" They don't even take time to consider what I've said; just reject it automatically.

I suspect most adults respond the same way, but maybe not always vocally.

I've seen it happen when I've told a kid that the Sun is a star, or that birds are dinosaurs, or anything else they either didn't know or had been taught incorrectly. One kid responded that way when I told her all cops are bad guys, even if she *likes* one.

It might be a mental self-defense reflex. Maybe it protects the mind from uncomfortable information, whether the information is correct or not. Probably a kid would be as skeptical if I told him trolls live under his bed and cut off his tail every night so that he never has a chance to grow one. Or maybe kids would find that more believable.

I really don't go out of my way to tell people things they may not know. Things just come up in conversation if I'm not careful about where my mind goes, with my words close behind. I don't usually press the issue when I'm not believed. I'm just observing reactions and collecting data.

I think it's a good thing that kids don't just accept what they are told. I hope they'll be curious and try to find out more, somewhere. I'd rather kids be skeptical than gullible. Even when it's me they are being skeptical of.