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Many Moms Are Taking Their Young Daughters to Get Waxed

When your daughter gets bullied for her unibrow, you make some unexpected choices.



BY [ERIN SILVER](#)

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Lindsey Schultz didn't know quite what to do when her 6-year-old daughter became self-conscious about her unibrow.

"One day Lily just gazed in the mirror and announced, 'I look like the Grinch,'" says Schultz, 31, who lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with her family. "She has her father's olive skin and dark hair, so I knew one day Lily would want to remove it. I just wasn't expecting it to happen so soon."

Schultz could have offered to help her daughter remove unwanted hair earlier, but she worried raising the subject too soon would cause Lily to associate beauty with confidence, damaging her self-esteem. She was also concerned that hair-removal treatments would be too harsh for her daughter's delicate skin and too painful. Desperate to find the gentlest option, she tried Nair, an at-home chemical cream that burns the hair. Instead, it burned Lily's skin. Left with no other option, she took Lily to a hair removal specialist.

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COURTESY OF LINDSEY SCHULTZ

Lindsey Schultz decided to take her daughter, Lily, 6, to the salon after she complained about her unibrow.

Though there isn't any national data to support the trend, hair removal for minors is definitely increasing in popularity, says Lauren Snow, director of membership for the [Associated Skin Care Professionals](#), the largest association for aestheticians in the U.S.

"There are spas that cater to younger clients with service menus that are less intimidating," says Snow.

[SugarSugar](#), in Scottsdale, Arizona, is one of them. "We were open for less than a week before several moms asked if I would sugar their 10-year-olds," says Aimee Blake, co-owner of SugarSugar, which opened in 2013. When it comes to kids, she says her services are beyond beauty.

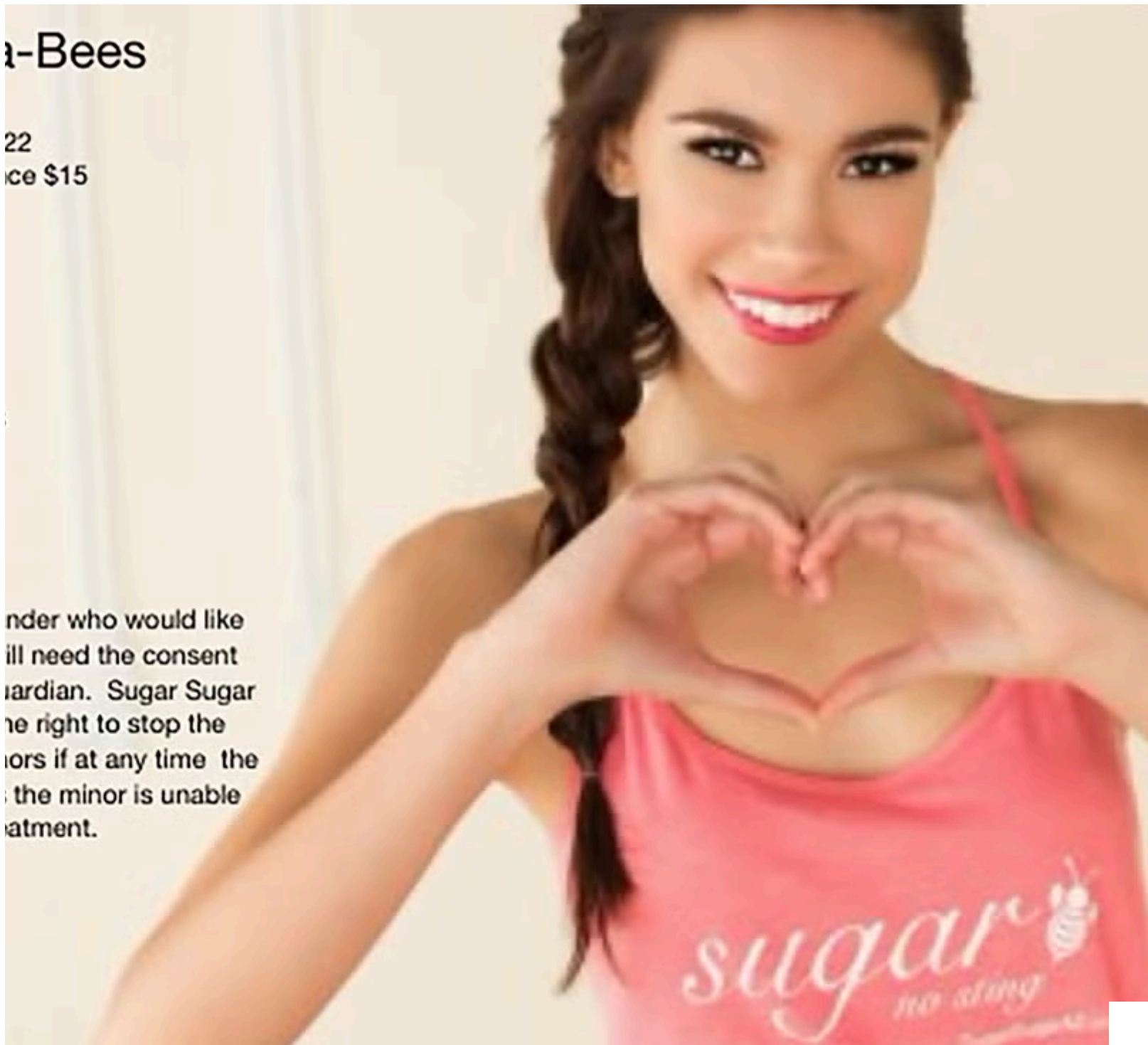
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"Kids can be cruel," says Blake. "All it takes is for one kid on the playground to make a comment to cause a child's self-esteem to plummet. I'd rather a child have their eyebrows done safely and professionally than try to shave them at home by themselves. We are just here to help."

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Her "underage" service menu is specially tailored for girls under 15, and has quickly risen in popularity. Each week, she sees up to 10 girls ages eight to 12 and several dozen 15-year-olds for services including brow shaping and hair removal on foreheads, lips, legs, and underarms. "We don't offer bikini waxes and we don't shape the brows to look glamorous," says Blake. "We do it responsibly, we educate parents and kids through every step of the process, and we only do it with parental consent."

Faced with the everyday pressures of fitting in, and increasingly Instagram-perfect society, more parents may be feeling pressure to give in to that consent, including Aylin Akar, who felt she needed to take action when her youngest daughter, Tuana, came home in tears.

The boys teased her about her unibrow and laughed that her leg hair was longer and darker than theirs."

"The boys were making fun of her," says the Toronto, Ontario-based mom of two girls. "She was just eight, but they teased her about her unibrow

and laughed that her leg hair was longer and darker than theirs. They were merciless."

Akar, 48, already knew the drill. Her older daughter, Lara, 13, experienced the same trauma, and last year, Akar allowed Lara to begin laser hair removal treatments to reduce the hair on her back, stomach, face, legs, underarms, and bikini area. Though Tuana was too young for the laser treatment, Akar, an aesthetician, waxed her daughter's brows, underarms and legs herself. "Now nobody makes fun of her."

Self-consciousness about body hair can ramp up during the teenage years. So bikini waxes for girls ages 12 or 13 are welcomed at [Waxing the City](#) in Dallas, Texas. Salon owner Melissa Narro, 34, says that girls in competitive gymnastics or swimming come regularly. "Moms don't want to hand their daughters a razor, so we do modified bikini waxes of the [thigh area]."

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In a typical week, she will probably wax about 50 girls ages eight and up. The most popular are eyebrow waxes, and about five to 10 go to bikini waxes for young teens. "We even waxed an 8-year-old boy's unibrow recently," says Narro. "He was getting made fun of at school, and after a quick treatment, he couldn't stop looking at himself in the mirror."

Tricia Hetherington, owner of the [Pretty Kitty](#) waxing salon franchise, says she didn't see much underage waxing when she opened her first salon in 2006. "The majority of my clients were women over 18, but there's a greater awareness now," she says. "Girls are developing younger and hair is a source of embarrassment. It's more common for girls to get waxed, and moms are starting their girls on it at a younger age."

Some opt for a waxing route because they believe it will provide a permanent solution to unwanted hair as a girl is still developing. Sugaring and waxing remove hair at the root, which aestheticians say prevents the hair follicle from producing thicker hairs and slows its course. "The more you shave, the more you have to shave; hair grows back within two days," says Hetherington. "With waxing, you can go three to four weeks without hair. Moms would rather help their girls deal with their hair from a younger age."

In communities of color, the demand for waxing services can be especially strong. Dolly Venegas, 42, brings her daughter, Piper, 12, to a Pretty Kitty location in Las Vegas every three weeks for eyebrow and upper lip treatments.

"We are Mexican, so Piper has darker hair," says Venegas. "We just clean it up and make sure she still looks like a little girl. It makes her feel really good. All her friends do it, too."





COURTESY OF DOLLY VENEGAS

Waxing makes Piper Venegas (in December 2015) \"feel really good.\"",

Despite how routine regular waxing may become for some families, studies show that focusing on beauty may do more damage to a girl's already fragile self-esteem. According to [*Real Girls, Real Pressure: National Report on the State of Self-Esteem*](#), conducted by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, seven in 10 girls believe they are not good enough or do not measure up in some way. Seventy-two percent of girls feel tremendous pressure to be beautiful, while nine out of 10 girls want to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance.

The issue is of serious concern to LaNail Plummer, a therapist in Washington, D.C. "Hair removal is a big deal," says Plummer. "You're creating the next generation of girls whose confidence is based on how they look rather than on who they are and what they offer internally. If you teach kids to associate confidence with body image, you risk damaging their self-esteem."

The risk is especially high when kids are young, and their brains haven't developed enough to make these decisions, something that usually occurs around age 13 or 14.

Plummer's advice: "Teach your kids to love themselves and have conversations with them early on to create a strong foundation. When a

child can discuss hair removal with you and their reasons for wanting it, then it's ok, but that's usually in late middle school or early high school."

She also advises parents to assess their own value systems. "If you're in support of physically altering your child's body, it may be more about the parent and their issues. Ask yourself why you're allowing this," she says.

Regardless of what the experts say, Schultz says her daughter was thrilled with the results. She continues to take Lily, now seven, to have her eyebrows done professionally. "Everyone should be confident and happy and not have to worry about their insecurities. I just wanted to help her remove hair that shouldn't socially be there. Until you're in that situation – until your daughter is in that situation – you don't know how you'll feel."

From: [Good Housekeeping US](#)
