DOZENS of parents have complained to the BBC that a disabled television presenter is scaring their children. Cerrie Burnell, who was born with one arm, and co-presenter Alex Winters took over the popular Do and Discover slot and The Bedtime Hour programme on the CBeebies channel last month.

But the decision to hire her has prompted a disturbing campaign which has become so vicious that some comments on the BBC message boards have had to be removed. One father said he would ban his daughter from watching the channel because he thought it would "give her nightmares".

Others said it had prompted difficult conversations with their children about disabilities. Some even accused the BBC of hiring the 29-year-old because of "political correctness" solely to meet employment quotas.

One blogger wrote: "Is it just me or does anyone else think the new woman presenter on CBeebies may scare the kids because of her disability?" Another parent who wrote to the message board said: "What is scary is the BBC's determination to show 'minorities' on CBeebies at every available opportunity." Miss Burnell, who has a four-month-old daughter, said she was upset at the "small-minded" and "terrible" comments.

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