

Mrs. Christie's tried and true problem solving tip: Teaching Kids About the Hazards of Spreading Rumors

Spreading rumors can be a hurtful activity. Even young children can learn the dangers and hazards of spreading rumors but it will take some focus and encouragement from parents and teachers for them to understand why.

The most important step adults can take in teaching children about NOT spreading rumors is for them to see this same behavior being modeled.

So how can we help our children understand this important lesson? Parents and teachers can all use these strategies:

- Encourage children to identify and empathize. Use statements like: "How would you feel if someone told something about you that might not be true?" Did you see it with your 'own' eyeballs? Did you hear it with your 'own' ears?
- Use imaginary play situations to "act out" rumors and gossip situations. Dolls, figurines and other toys can be used to pretend real life situations and help children understand expectations and ways to handle it.
- Review, remind and model the expected and appropriate behavior.

The ultimate goal is to keep rumors from becoming a class-room, neighborhood or school problem. With a consistent message from school and the home we will help our children develop social skills that will last a lifetime.

Here's what a few of our grade ones would say to someone spreading rumors:

At recess a friend asks Nicole if she heard that Mrs. Christie stole Mrs. Roberts' lunch out of the fridge in the classroom.



Nicole would say:

"Did you see it with your own eyeballs?"

If they said no I would tell them to stop spreading rumors and walk away.

At lunch the classroom monitors told Anna that they heard that Mrs. Van Dalfsen was not going to let kids play on any of the playground equipment for the rest of the school year.

Anna would say:

Did you hear it with your own ears?

If they said NO....I would tell them to stop spreading rumors and walk away.

