

A message  
from your  
school  
counselor  
Mrs. Cook!

# Counselor's Corner

## Talking Around the Kids: 6 Things to Avoid

You have made it through the alarms, toothpaste mess in the bathroom, carpool line and more. The beginning of the school year can be a wild roller coaster ride. As we begin to fall into our routines, and with the September buzz calming down be sure you are taking the time to talk with your child about school in ways that cultivate a positive school environment and get kids excited about learning! Below are some helpful tips taken from a useful article I found on WebMD, written by R. Morgan Griffin.



### What shouldn't you discuss when little ears could hear?

1. **Fraught topics.** Be careful talking about big issues -- like financial problems or a family crisis. Your kids are listening. Kids are magnetically drawn toward arguments and emotional discussions, says Eileen Kennedy-Moore, PhD, a psychologist in Princeton, N.J., and coauthor of *Smart Parenting for Smart Kids: Nurturing Your Child's True Potential*. However, they may not really understand what's going on. Their interpretations may be scarier than what's actually happening. **What to do instead:** "If something big is going on in your household, trying to hide it from your kids won't work," says Kennedy-Moore. "Give them the basic facts." The most important detail is how these changes will affect your child.
2. **Trash talk.** Are you always criticizing your child's teacher, your mother, or your ex-husband? **What to do instead:** Stop. You're modeling bad behavior for your kids. You may also say something mean about a person your kids care about -- and that can be deeply unsettling for them.
3. **Criticism of your kids.** Do you tend to vent about the frustrations of parenthood on the phone? Be careful. "It can be really hurtful if your kids overhear you criticizing them or talking about some mistake they made," says Kennedy-Moore. "They're likely to feel ashamed and then angry." **What you should do instead:** Don't get in the habit of complaining about your kids. "Be discreet about your kids' indiscretions," says Kennedy-Moore. Try not to repeat them to others.
4. **Complaining.** Adults tend to complain a lot -- especially about their jobs. What's the problem? You're modeling a bad attitude that your kids could apply to school -- or later in life when they have jobs. **What you should do instead:** Talk about the positive aspects of your work. "If you worked on an interesting project recently, make sure to mention that," says Kennedy-Moore.
5. **Upsetting world events.** "For kids, the world is a small place," says Kennedy-Moore. "They may overhear you talking about the news and assume that burglars are going to be coming to *their* house, or



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a tsunami may hit *their* town."

**What you should do instead:** You shouldn't shield your kid completely from world events. Just help them put the news in context and reassure them, Kennedy-Moore says.

6. **Swearing.** Many adults swear in front of their kids on occasion. Don't overreact when your kids imitate you -- that will just make the words more exciting.

**What you should do instead:** Try hard not to swear in front of your kids says Kennedy-Moore. If you can't se

7. em to control your profane outbursts, try a swear jar.