



Tips for Involved Parents and Students



14 Tips for promoting civic responsibility

The three most important words in real estate are “Location, Location, Location.” In Civics Education, they just might be “Exposure, Exposure, Exposure.” As a parent, you can continually guide your children toward experiences that will enhance their knowledge and appreciation of the community, country, and world in which they live.

- 1 Keep current.** The newspaper, news and public service television programs, radio news shows, reliable online news sources... all of these are great resources for you and your child as you keep current on current events. As a parent, you are your child’s first and most influential teacher and your example will have an impact on your child’s habits.
- 2 Keep talking.** At an age-appropriate level, discuss current events with your student and the impact those events may have.
- 3 Take the micro-macro view.** Help your child learn about key issues at all levels... from events in your neighborhood or town up through regional, state, national, and global events.
- 4 Bring it home.** It may be difficult for your student to connect events in other places and votes in Washington (or at any other level) with their everyday lives. Help your child make those connections. How does a vote on college tuition affect your family? How about rezoning for a new school? World news stories about restricted learning opportunities for girls, famine, and crackdowns on dissidents in another land can lead to family discussions on public education, natural resources, and freedoms enjoyed in this country.
- 5 Vote.** Wear that “I voted” sticker with pride. Explain why you vote. Discuss how you become an informed voter and what goes into your decision for a candidate or ballot measure. Talk about what happens when citizens do not register and exercise their right to vote.
- 6 Value talk and talk values.** Talk to your children about their day. Our daily lives are rich with opportunities to discuss values such as equity, fairness, and responsibility.
- 7 Duty-bound.** Talk to your child about your own experiences in a positive way. While jury duty, voting, and other civic duties may not always be convenient, they’re important and necessary.
- 8 Write a letter.** Communicating with public officials is an important way to participate in civic life. Encourage your child to use his persuasive letter-writing skills to share a suggestion or voice a concern.
- 9 Household civics.** Compare and contrast family rules and privileges with laws that everyone must follow and rights we have as U.S. citizens. In family meetings, share in decision-making— meal planning, choosing chores from a chore wheel, or selecting a TV program to watch. Share household responsibilities. Work on a family history together. All of these practices can help build cooperation, respect, and pride in the family, while preparing children to be civic-minded members of their community
- 10 Community pride.** Take part in the life of your community. Attend festivals, art shows, sporting events, and school activities. Join local service and civic clubs. Support your child’s participation in scouting, community sports, or other youth groups. Attend public forums and meetings sponsored by your neighborhood association, city and county governments, and school board.
- 11 Serve others together.** Check with United Way (dial 2-1-1) or contact other community agencies to connect with worthwhile projects.
- 12 Don’t take a vacation from learning.** Use family travels to learn about the geography and history of the U.S. Before you go, help your child research the places you will visit.
- 13 Culture close to home.** Atlanta is rich with historical and cultural opportunities. Arrange family visits to the Carter Center, the King Center, historic buildings and neighborhoods, and museums. Look for events, such as the recent “Family Day” at the Capitol.
- 14 Observe civic holidays.** Explain the historic and civic significance of these important days.