

# ENGAGING WITH MY COMMUNITY

## Dear Families and Caregivers,

Civic engagement consists of the actions residents take to improve their community and the lives of its members. But your community is not limited to the place where you live. Your communities are the people with whom you share any location, interest group, or identity group. Supporting any of these is a form of civic engagement. Whether you're helping a young person in your neighborhood apply for jobs, donating resources to your local library, or spreading awareness about an organization that helps others, you're civically engaged.

### Sparking Conversations

Talk to your child about the communities you belong to. Maybe you're part of a book club, a church or religious group, or a volunteer organization. These are all communities. Tell your child about them. Then ask your child to think of the communities they're part of. After making a list, consider community's status. Identify each as "strong," meaning it's not in need and is able to support others; "in good shape," meaning it has its needs met at the moment; or "in need," meaning it could use support. Talk about what might be required to change the status of the "in need" communities. Can your family help? Can other communities you're part of?

### Get Active

Choose one of the "in need" communities to support. Then ask kids to consider their strengths. Do they like speaking in front of a crowd? Are they a persuasive writer? A good problem-solver? Talk about how kids can leverage their strengths for civic engagement. Then have them think of other people or groups with different strengths. Come up with a plan to utilize each person's or group's strengths and resources to make a positive impact. Have a discussion about why civic engagement is important and how it feels to support the communities you're part of.

## Groups That Help Kids Make a Difference

### 4-H, [4-h.org/programs/civic-engagement](https://4-h.org/programs/civic-engagement)

- The civic engagement initiatives through 4-H empower young people to become active, engaged citizens who are involved in improving their local community and the world. Program areas include leadership and personal development, community action, communication and expressive arts, rural youth development, and Juntos 4-H.

### Boy Scouts of America, [scouting.org](https://scouting.org)

- Boy Scouts of America offers various scouting programs for children from kindergarten through age 20. Through character development and values-based leadership training, scouts are encouraged to recognize the needs of others in the community and take action accordingly.

### Girl Scouts, [girlscouts.org](https://girlscouts.org)

- The Girl Scout organization has been around since 1910, with a goal of inspiring girls to unlock their full potential, make deep friendships, and leave the world a better place. Girl Scouts of all ages are encouraged to give back and make an impact on their community through a variety of activities, such as restocking a community food pantry or lobbying for change at a city council meeting.