
SO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT VOTING

A Conversation Guide for Kids and Parents

So you want to talk to your parents about politics. That's great! It's really important to get involved in democracy, especially given the state of our country. Maybe you have the same views as your parents, maybe you don't. Either way, it's important to approach the conversation with respect and an open mind. It's frustrating to be at an age when you understand the importance of politics, but you can't yet vote. Because of this, it's good to understand why your parents are voting, who they're voting for, and how they researched candidates to come to an informed decision.

I: Important Vocabulary

Define each term together and talk about them. What does each word mean? How does each one affect your lives?

Democracy

Congress

House of Representatives

Senate

Federal

State

Local

Legislative

Judicial

Supreme Court

II: Why are you voting?

Kids: You might know why you want to vote, but maybe your parents have different reasons. Ask them why they're voting! Listen to their points of view without interrupting, and then let them know why you want to vote. Some reasons may include:

A celebrity or famous figure emphasized the importance of voting

A character in a book or movie voted and made a difference

Your friends have talked about wanting to vote

You've seen ads about voting

You're unhappy with the current president and want to change

You know that some people can't vote, so you feel lucky you are able to

Parents: Instilling an appreciation for democracy is important as your kids begin figuring out their place both in the world and in America. Tell them the truth about why you vote, and then ask them what they think about your reasoning. Remember that even though these topics may seem too big, it's vital that they have someone to teach them about politics in a clear and engaging way.

III: Who are you voting for and how did you choose them?

Kids: There are many types of government positions you can vote for, and each one is important. Ask your parents about who they're voting for. Ask them why they chose that candidate!

Parents: It's important to talk about where to find trustworthy information about candidates. Talk about bias and about blind party loyalty. Try and speak from your own experiences and inform your child(ren) about where you got your information about who you support. Was it their website? A newspaper? Talk about the dangers of ads and the necessity of accurate sources. Maybe bring up the internet and false information that's often spread.

Kids: Hopefully, this conversation helped you think about politics in a new way and understand your parents' ideas. Do you still have questions? Do you want to talk about voting with your friends or other members of your family? That's great! It's important to continue talking about this, even when you're grown up and you can finally vote.

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