

A GUIDE TO ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

In this guide we will explore the topic of social justice advocacy and how you can engage your family in social justice advocacy activities at home and in the community.

WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY?

Social justice is justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. *Advocacy* is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence those in the position of power. When we combine these two terms together, we are aiming to work with positions of power to create social change, develop problem-solving processes, and encourage people to take action to affect change.

There are a lot of misconceptions of what social justice advocacy is, so let us dispel those myths:

Advocacy is NOT necessarily politically affiliated. As a member of society, we all have the power and right to influence decisions that affect us.

Advocacy is NOT just for experts. Anyone can be an advocate, especially young people or children.

Advocacy does NOT have to be a massive project. It can grow from small beginnings. Do not assume that just because your idea is small that it will not make a difference.

SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

There are many different types of social justice issues, but these issues can be grouped into two categories:

Inter-social treatment: Involves treatment of certain groups based on personally held biases and prejudices. They most often are around these categories:

- Race
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Nationality
- Mental or physical ability

Unequal government regulations: Laws or regulations that purposefully or otherwise create conditions that obstruct, limit, or deny certain groups equitable access to the same opportunities.

WHY SHOULD YOU INVOLVE YOUR FAMILY?

Whether you talk about it or not, children have a keen awareness of fairness and differences. Young children, as early as 2 years old, especially demand right over wrong and notice differences without discomfort. Studies have shown that children as young as 3 years old will embrace and accept prejudice and racism even though they might not understand it. Talking about and advocating for social justice at a young age can unlearn or reverse bias that they might be exposed to in other environments.

Once a child understands issues around social injustice, they will then be ready and wanting to do something to help their friends or fellow community members. That is where advocacy fits in perfectly. By engaging your family in social justice advocacy, they will be able to channel their feelings of anger, sadness, or frustration into actions that can make a difference in their community.

CONNECTING TO GIRL SCOUTS

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been core values of Girl Scouts since its founding in 1912. Girl Scouts of Colorado and Girl Scouts of the USA value diversity in all its forms and do not discriminate. Our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place is the foundation for guiding girls who are engaged in their community and strive to address issues of social injustice. From reciting the [Girl Scout Promise and Law](#) to earning [Highest Awards](#), Girl Scouts understand how to go above and beyond to make a difference in their community and around the world.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

We understand that starting the conversation around social injustice might be the hardest part. To help you, we have provided some activities, books, and movies to start exposing your family to these issues and then reflection questions to discuss what they have learned.

Activities:

Take the [Implicit Association Test](#) as individuals or as a family. You can choose from a variety of associations that are made within our society. It is a good place to start to understand what bias might already exist in you or your family.

Complete Girl Scouts of Colorado's [Diverse. Inclusive. Together. patch program](#). You will explore developmentally appropriate activities that start the conversation of race and racism.

Reflection Questions:

What feelings or reactions did you have upon learning about implicit bias?

How might your experiences have shaped your bias, with or without your awareness?

How might knowing about implicit bias affect your future actions and decisions?

Books:

[What Can a Citizen Do? by Dave Eggers](#) Appropriate for ages 4-8.

[The Undeclared by Kwame Alexander](#) Appropriate for ages 6-9.

[The Pants Project by Cat Clarke](#) Appropriate for ages 9-13.

[We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson](#) Appropriate for ages 9+

[Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice by Terreece Clarke](#) Appropriate for ages 13+.

[Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarian R. Banaji](#) Appropriate for adults.

Movies:

[Dr. Seuss: The Lorax](#) Appropriate for ages 5+.

[Kindness is Contagious](#) Appropriate for ages 9+.

[Inequality for All](#) Appropriate for ages 11+.

Reflection Questions:

What person/character had the power in the story?

What issue or problem was being talked about?

How did the main character advocate for or get others to support their issue?

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY AT HOME

The first step of starting social justice advocacy at home, is deciding what issues your family is interested in or passionate about. Hold a family meeting and use the following questions to guide your discussion.

Is there anything that you feel really frustrated about?

What ideas do you have to improve something you aren't happy about?

What could be done differently in your community that would benefit people?

After you have come up with a couple issues that your family is interested in, research local and national organizations that can help you get started with your advocacy.

Here are some suggestions:

[American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU)

[Antidefamation League](#) (combating anti-Semitism)

[Human Rights Campaign](#) (LGBTQ Equality)

[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP)

[National Coalition for the Homeless](#)

[TASH](#) (disability advocacy)

THE LEARNING NEVER STOPS

An important concept to discuss with your family is understanding that being an advocate does not stop after one lesson, or one rally, or one campaign, rather it is being committed to continuing to learn about issues of social injustice and to encourage people of power to take action to affect change.

To help you continue your learning journey, check out our [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resources](#) on the Girl Scouts of Colorado website. We will continually update this site with resources and materials to engage you and your family.

Have questions? Reach out to us at GirlExperience@gscolorado.org

RESOURCES

Children’s Hospital of Colorado. (n.d.). *How to Talk About Racism and National Protests with Your Children*. https://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/parenting/parenting-articles/talk-about-racism-protests-with-children/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=2020_jac

Healthline. (n.d.). *How to Talk to Your Kids About Injustice, Racism, and Protests*. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-racism>

Pachamama Alliance. (n.d.). *Social Justice Issues*. <https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/social-justice-issues>

Spiegler, J. (2016, June 16). *Teaching Young Children About Bias, Diversity, and Social Justice*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-young-children-social-justice-jinnie-spiegler>

WAGGGS. (n.d.) *Speak Out for Her World*. https://duz92c7qaoni3.cloudfront.net/documents/Advocacy_Toolkit_v3.pdf