



Talking to Your Kids About the Election

Tips for supporting your kids as well as yourself this election season

- **Seek out kid-friendly, age-appropriate news resources.** Take a look at resources that are age-appropriate before reviewing with your kids (for example Scholastic Kids News Press Corps). Find a time to look at articles and discuss them together.
- **Use age-appropriate information and language when discussing politics.** Make sure kids can understand the terms that you're using when discussing difficult-to-understand concepts. And be mindful of how you say it – kids are great imitators, so you want to give them something good to imitate.
- **Ask kids what they see and hear in the media and correct inaccurate information.** Keep the dialogue open. When they're ready, distinguish facts from fiction. Separate what is actually happening from any worries about what will or might happen and focus on the facts. Reassure realistically – it's okay to not know all the answers, and sharing that models good coping.
- **Limit media exposure.** Place limits on the amount of time that kids have access to media through their devices. Pick a time of day where kids (and you) can read and access the news (for example around dinner time to leave room for discussion). Turn off notifications for news or other alerts that have the potential to be disruptive.
- **Validate and honor feelings.** It's normal to feel anxious or worried about the upcoming election, and it's good to let kids know that feelings of anger, frustration or sadness are common and understandable reactions. Let kids express their feelings and follow their lead. Stay in the present moment and help set the emotional tone for the conversation by modeling calmness and active listening. Statements like "I hear you," "I'm listening," and "Tell me more about it" can help kids feel ready to talk and feel understood. Let them know that the adults in their lives are here to keep them safe.
- **Distraction and positive activities are okay!** Having fun or distracting activities to look forward to can improve your mood and provide a much-needed break. Feel free to plan time away from difficult topics so you can recharge and be ready for the next conversation.

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Our teams work every day to deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain, and empower parents, professionals and policymakers to support children when and where they need it most. Together with our supporters, we're helping children reach their full potential in school and in life. Learn more at childmind.org.