

Tips and Conversation Starters for Families

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before advocating for any issue, young people should use the internet to research the topic. The more knowledgeable they are about the issue, the more effectively they can communicate about it on- and offline. Researching the issue may also bring them into contact with key stakeholders. These may be other people in the community who care about the issue or decision makers who can help approve any solutions. While researching, young people may also come across others who have successfully addressed similar issues in their communities. Young people may be able to adapt these solutions to meet their needs or get advice from other advocates about how to succeed. Young people should also apply their digital citizenship skills here — they will need to verify their information before taking any actions.



START A CONVERSATION ABOUT RESEARCHING THE ISSUE:

- What information do you need before advocating for an issue?
- Who might we want to contact about this issue? Do you think we can find their contact information online?
- How do we know this information is from a reputable source? (Hint: Use the five verification questions mentioned in Digital Engagement)

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KNOW THE TOOLS

Helping young people use digital tools for positive change starts with knowing what the tools are and understanding how they can be used. For example, internet memes allow people to use popular culture as a foundation for spreading their own ideas. If your child is interested in bringing attention to a cause, they may be able to use a meme to raise awareness. Hashtags are another digital tool young people can use to magnify their online voices. Hashtags help people organize similar ideas under one search term so they can be found online easily. Even if you are not ready for your child to create their own memes and hashtags, they can use these and other digital tools to learn about the work already being done around their cause. For example, they can use hashtags to search for people, events, and volunteer opportunities related to their causes.



START A CONVERSATION ABOUT USING EMPOWERMENT TOOLS:

- What causes do you care about? How can you use the internet and social media to help solve them?
- Let's use a hashtag to learn more about (your child's cause).
- What are your favorite internet memes? Could they help raise awareness of (your child's cause)?

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PROVIDE SUPPORT

Young people of all ages may be interested in solving problems in their communities. However, social media is not an age-appropriate tool for all children. Many social media platforms have an age requirement to help protect younger users. This doesn't mean that your child can't use the power of the internet to address their issues. You can use your own online presence to help your child bring awareness to their cause. For example, you can join an online community that focuses on your child's cause of interest. This will give your child the opportunity to learn more about the issue, while offering you the chance to preview content and screen potential contacts. If you are active on social media, you may want to use your networks to promote a hashtag, meme, or other content your child created about their cause. Your involvement lends your child both support and protection as they try to bring positive change to the world.



START A CONVERSATION SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S ADVOCACY:

- How may I help you spread the word about (your child's cause) online?
- Are there any online communities we can join to learn more about (your child's cause)?
- Let's create a (hashtag, image, meme, etc.) that I can share with my friends to help people learn more about (your child's cause).

Activities for Families

USING HASHTAGS

Young people can use hashtags to learn or share about the issues and social causes they want to address. This activity will help your child learn more about how hashtags work and how they can be used to encourage social good.

1. Start by making sure that your child knows what hashtagging is: The use of a hashtag to help organize information around a specific topic, making it easier to find online. If your child has used hashtags, ask them which ones.
2. Tell your child: **Some people use hashtags to raise awareness about problems they want to solve.**
3. Share some ways that people have used hashtags for social good. Talk about a social awareness campaign from your community.
4. Ask your child: **Are there any issues in our community that you want people to pay more attention to?**
5. Help your child find a photo related to their issue. Then, develop two or three hashtags for the photo that will help raise awareness of your child's issue. (Note: Before searching for the image, see if your browser has tools to help you filter out inappropriate content and find images with the correct usage rights.)



CHALLENGE

If your child is comfortable with the idea, consider sharing the hashtags on- or offline. For example, you can post them to your social media profile. Consider assigning each hashtag a number and letting your social media network vote for their favorite.

Activities for Families

RACE TO RESEARCH

Young people can use the internet to learn about causes they care about. This activity helps young people learn more about how to research issues they want to address.

1. Talk to your child about the causes they are interested in and decide on one cause to research.
2. Ask your child what information would be important to learn about their cause. Brainstorm search terms you can use to look for information, including hashtags. While researching, try to find:
 - A simple explanation of the issue, including:
 - How it started (if relevant).
 - How it affects people.
 - How many people it affects.
 - The name of one or two people working to solve the issue.
 - A social media campaign raising awareness of the issue.
 - An event about the issue in your community.
3. Help your child evaluate each source by using the five verification steps: (1) Where did the content come from? (2) Who created the content? (3) When was it created? (4) Where was it created? (5) Why was it created?

Your child should also use the triple-check method to check facts for accuracy: If the same information is repeated by at least three reputable sources, it is usually accurate.

4. When your research is complete, ask your child to choose a method for sharing the information either on- or offline. For example, they could make a poster, create a hashtag, write a song, or film a PSA.