

10 TIPS FOR TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT GLOBAL ISSUES



01 Go with their **interests**

There are lots of global issues – but you don't have to teach your kids about all of them at once! A school assignment, news stories, books, movies or even song lyrics might spark a child's interest in a particular issue, so use those opportunities to start a conversation.

02 Find out what they already know

Exploring what a child has already seen or heard will help you to figure out what you need to explain, what they might be worried about, and if they have any inaccurate information.



03 Do your own **research**

Sometimes kids might ask questions about issues you've never even thought about! Don't worry if you don't have all the answers – it's a great chance to role model active, lifelong learning. Becoming more informed about the facts will also help you to dispel myths and stereotypes.

04 Give them **age-appropriate** explanations

Use words and examples they'll understand to explain global issues and events, but keep it simple and don't over-share about concerning elements. If you're worried about the situation, discuss your own fears and thoughts with another grown-up, not with a child.

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Make it personal

For lots of kids, poverty and lots of other big issues seem a distant concept, far removed from their own reality. Finding ways to bring the need of others closer to your child's world, like asking them to put themselves in someone else's shoes, can help them connect with the issues personally and foster empathy and compassion.

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Help them see the hope

Thinking about the world's problems can be confronting and even scary for kids. Reassure them and explain how you're keeping them safe. For example, if they are concerned that they might have to leave their home and become refugees, explain how we don't have the same the political problems that are causing the violence in Syria, South Sudan, Myanmar, or Venezuela. Explaining what is being done to help the issue, and encouraging kids to look for the people who are helping in difficult situations, can help kids to be reassured that there is hope.

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Draw it out

Some issues might be more difficult than others for kids to process and come to terms with, and kids will process their thoughts in different ways. Some kids might just want to talk, but others might find it easier to draw about it. Children's counsellors frequently use this technique, and we also use it in the Child-Friendly Spaces we set up after disasters.

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Look for learning opportunities

Once you start looking, you'll be amazed at how many events and activities are going on in your local area, from tree planting days to multicultural festivals hosted by refugee groups, to help you bring global issues to life for children. **International recognition days** can also be a fantastic way to get your family thinking about some issues you might never have considered, and there is a wealth of great resources available online to dig into anything that piques your interest.

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Give them ways to take action

Encouraging kids to find ways to take action and be part of the solution can be powerful. One way to turn their passion into positive action is to help them raise funds for a cause they want to get behind. Or you could write letters to politicians to advocate for change, volunteer at a local soup kitchen, donate clothes or toys you no longer need, or offer to mow the lawn or make a meal for someone in your neighbourhood who needs help. The possibilities are endless!

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Don't force it

Kids are all different. Some will clearly be passionate world-changers from day one while others may develop empathy and the confidence to take action later in life. Sometimes they will have days and moments where they just don't get it, or they act selfishly. That's ok! If your kids aren't showing interest right now, just wait for an opportunity when they are engaged again.