

Parents

Latina.

**PICK THE
RIGHT
PET
FOR YOUR
FAMILIA**

**#STRESSED
WHEN
NEW-MOM
WORRIES
GO INTO
OVERDRIVE**

¡SÍ SE PUEDE!

**Raise a
Good
Citizen**

MÁS
CONTENIDO
PARA TI EN
LA SECCIÓN

**ser
Padres.**

QUIZ

**IS YOUR
KID A
HEALTHY
EATER?**

5

**EASY
EGG
RECIPES
FOR EASTER
BRUNCH
(OR ANY MEAL)**

Inspire Your Kids to Change the World



Want to raise engaged citizens? It's never too early to teach kids what it means to stand up for what's right. After all, the future depends on it!

BY WANDA MEDINA ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSIE PORTILLO

CHANCES ARE, your kids have seen homeless people on the street and wondered what the word “refugee” means. And while you may want to shield them from social injustices, you also want to prepare them for life and reinforce that they can make a difference. Activism—whether it’s through a demonstration or writing a letter to a policy maker—helps kids feel like part of a local or global community, says Lina Acosta Sandaal, M.A., a family therapist in Miami. “It gives them a sense of purpose and fulfillment.” What’s more, children involved in civic engagement learn key life skills: teamwork, public speaking, and patience, since many of the things we advocate for take time to change. It’s up to us as grown-ups to empower our little Cesar Chavezes and mini Dolores Huertas to make their voices heard. Keep reading for inspiration on how to start the conversation now.

PROTEST PRIMER

While marching for a cause can encourage kids to stand up for equal rights, it can also be overwhelming for younger children (think thousands of people and hours of standing in large crowds, for starters). The best age for kids to start marching is about 8, when they tend to be more emotionally aware, says Acosta Sandaal, but it will depend on the individual

child. If you think yours are ready to join a protest, here’s how to prepare them.

● Talk it out.

Before the big day, discuss your family values with your kids and why it’s important to attend the march, says Carmen Perez, the executive director of The Gathering for Justice and the national cochair of the Women’s March. If you’re taking your daughter to a women’s event, for example, tell her, “We’re marching because we believe

that girls should have the same rights and opportunities as boys.” And make sure to use phrases such as “marching for” instead of “fighting against,” which can sound scary to kids.

● Map it out.

Get kids involved in the planning process. Research official details, such as start and end points. Then, print out a map of the route and work with your family to decide where you might stop for rest and some snack breaks. And don't forget to locate toilets ahead of time.

● Maximize comfort.

Ahead of the event, find out what size backpacks are allowed and fill them with essentials: a change of outfit, sunscreen, water, and cash for unplanned costs. The day of, wear comfy clothes and layers that are easy to stash.

● Have a plan.

When you arrive, locate and agree on a meeting place in the event that you split up, and find out where the police and welcome stations are located, says Diana Limongi Gabriele, a mom of two in New York who hosts a podcast on parenting and politics. “Even if your kids know your phone number by heart, write it on their arms with a sharpie, just in case.”

● Take it easy.

A march can last a whole day. If you need to take public transportation for a portion of the protest, go for it. Tell your kids that you're giving it a rest because everyone is tired, but remind them how a march usually works. “You can say, ‘Protesters typically walk the entire way, but I want you to experience the end, so we're taking a break,’” says Perez. They'll still get the essence of why they're there.

Use Your Words

> SIGN LANGUAGE

Artsy kids will relish the chance to create an effective protest poster. “You want your message to be seen and understood,” writes author Caroline Paul in *You Are Mighty—A Guide to Changing the World*. “Your protest sign should make a statement (We Shall Overcome), support a cause (Peace on Earth), or ask for a change (Stop Animal Testing).”

> SPECIAL DELIVERY

Research shows that handwritten letters are still the best way to communicate with policy makers. To find out how to get in touch with those who represent your district in Congress, go to house.gov/representatives/find/ and senate.gov/senators/contact. Then put pen to paper. Just remember to be direct, to the point, and courteous.



MAKE
ART TO
MAKE
CHANGE.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Turn their concerns about the world into action with these simple deeds.

MY KID CARES ABOUT

WHAT YOU CAN DO

ANIMALS



Collect shelter supplies.

If your kid isn't old enough to volunteer at a shelter, he can still pitch in. During spring cleaning, have him gather household items (blankets, towels, old newspapers, laundry detergent...) that will come in handy at any animal shelter.

ENVIRONMENT



“Spread” seeds.

On Earth Day (April 22), let your child buy seeds of a favorite flower, and divvy them up into small drawstring bags that she can distribute to neighbors with a note that says, “Let's celebrate Earth Day every day!”

HUNGER



Deliver meals.

Work together with your child to go through your pantry and pick out items that you can donate to a food program such as Meals on Wheels, which delivers meals to elderly individuals who are hungry and disabled.

HOMELESS



Make goody bags.

Rally extended family members to donate and pack everyday essentials (deodorant, toilet paper, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, socks, and nonperishable snacks) into gallon-size zip-top bags that you and your kid can drop off at a local homeless shelter.



BOOKS THAT EMPOWER

● **Undocumented: A Worker's Fight** by Duncan Tonatui

This accordion-style picture book shares the compelling story of an undocumented busboy who risks deportation when he confronts his scheming boss. Illustrated in the art of the ancient Mixtec population, it's a bold tale about standing up for what's right no matter what it takes. Ages 8+

● **What Can a Citizen Do?**
by Dave Eggers,
illustrated by Shawn Harris
Full of diverse characters, this rhyming picture book reminds kids that even the youngest citizens can contribute to a better society by helping neighbors, writing letters, and accepting others for who they are. Ages 4 to 8

● **Never Too Young! 50 Unstoppable Kids Who Made a Difference**
by Aileen Weintraub,
illustrated by Laura Horton
This collection of mini biographies celebrates the lives of children who made an impact on the world before they were even adults. Artist Pablo Picasso, soccer legend Pelé, and Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai are just some of the names that will encourage kids to dream big. Ages 8 to 12

Fostering Family Values

Want to raise children who truly care about others? It starts by teaching them compassion, empathy, and kindness right at home. Here, Mexican-American civil-rights attorney and activist Mónica Ramírez shares how she's instilling those values in her 5-year-old son, Emerson.

1

Compassion

lets you care about others' distress. That's why when we read books about activism, we explain what the community or government is doing to fix that issue, and how we can help as a family. We don't want our children, who are just beginning to dream, to see only negative things happening. They need to know that things can change and that they can be a part of that change.

2

Empathy

is the ability to feel in your heart what others are going through. When children were separated from their families at the border, we talked with Emerson about how he would feel if that happened to him, and he imagined being in their shoes. Even though kids are little, they can still understand; you just have to use relatable terms.

3

Kindness

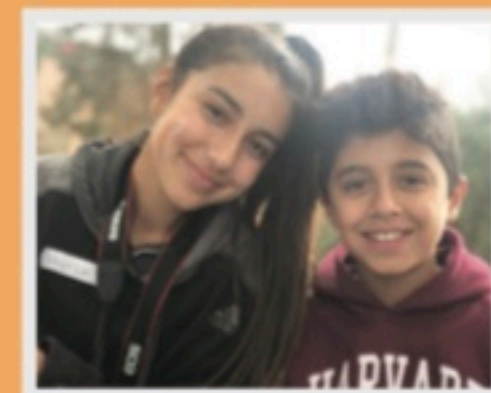
is about teaching kids to be generous and nice to others. We model it by going through his stuff during the holidays and letting him choose what to donate to a child in need. We also teach him that he can make life better for others by volunteering his time to create posters for rallies or sharing ideas on how to improve his school.



Remember that you're the best role model for your child.

CHANGE AGENTS

These kids are proof that you can make a difference at any age.



BUILDING HOPE

In 2018, the Benitez siblings—Daniella, 14, and Gabriel, 12—raised \$32,000 to build houses for homeless families in Tijuana, Mexico, via the nonprofit Build a Miracle, which facilitated the construction effort. "Seeing the smiles on the families' faces as they walk into their new homes changes my life, maybe even more than it changes theirs," says Daniella, who, with her brother, is dedicating her life to this cause.



KIDS FOR KIDS

Months after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico in 2017, Jayden Perez, 10, worried that kids on the island wouldn't have presents during the holidays, so he donated his gifts. But he didn't stop there. With help from his family, he organized a toy drive that collected 1,100 toys for kids affected by Maria. "I'm Puerto Rican, so I wanted to help," he says. So far, he has collected food for abandoned pets and organized drives for baby food and lanterns.