

The Kids Voting BC [website](#) has numerous resources available for students and families to enrich your Election 2011 research. The following list (borrowed with permission from Democracy-NC.org) contains fun activities that provide many opportunities for meaningful discussions with the students in your lives.



12 Summer Civic Activities for Families & Friends

1. **Attend local festivals** and check out the tents maintained by political parties, non-profit groups and political action committees. Take the opportunity to point out that people have different priorities and opinions - and that in a democracy, people respect other people's opinions, even if they don't agree with them.
2. **Help your child take photographs of your town** for an on-line or printed book about "Our Freedoms" or "The Citizens of [Your Town]." Use the book to discuss diversity, equality, poverty and related issues.
3. **Take a driving tour of different neighborhoods in your town** and use the trip as a chance to discuss the idea that people are often different in how they look, where they come from, that they may have different incomes - and different opportunities as a result - and that they may have different needs, depending on their age. Then explain that, regardless of these differences, they all have equal rights as citizens.
4. **Attend city council meetings, county commissioner meetings**, school board meetings, zoning board meetings and court sessions with your child. Make sure they understand that ordinary people are standing up to speak vs. other people in the room who have been elected to be leaders.
5. **Visit historical museums, monuments, and/or national parks** and discuss what part in democracy each place played.



6. **Take a tax tour as you drive around** and have your child guess what services and facilities are being paid for by tax dollars. Use this opportunity to explain to your child what taxes are, why people pay them and what benefits



they receive in return. Be sure to include the library, police and fire services, public schools, prisons, roads, garbage pick-up, city parks, etc.

7. **Use a driving tour to play a game** based on guessing whether a building or other facility is owned by the public (paid for by taxes) or is a private property (owned by an individual or groups of individuals). Use this distinction as a basis to discuss how people quite naturally act in their own best interests but that government is different: it is supposed to act in the public good and do what's best for all the people.
8. **Sponsor a local candidate reception at your house** and have your child help you plan the event and invite neighbors to come. Let your child introduce the candidate to others.
9. **Schedule a field trip** to one or more of the following: the Mayor's office, your congressional representative's office, the Board of Elections, County Commissioners Chambers, District Court, City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce.
10. **Create an imaginary town budget.** Once you learn about basic government services, give your child a set amount to spend on these services and help them divide the money up. Create a pie chart to show their spending priorities.
11. **Hold a family referendum or election**, even on something as simple as whether to order pizza or fried chicken for dinner. Prepare ballots and use a special Family Voting Box and hold an election to determine what the family will do. Use this technique to illustrate that people vote on policies as well as candidates.
12. **Have your child choose a local issue important to them** and help them decide what they think should be done about it. Have them write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. Be sure they sign their age with their name as that may encourage the editor to print it. Send the letter in. Use checking for the letter as an excuse for reading more letters to the editor and discussing the idea of different viewpoints and opinions.

