

# I Make a Difference

## **Responsibility:**

*A task you are expected to do (like brushing your teeth) or a way to act (like being quiet when the teacher talks).*

## **Civic Mindset:**

*Caring about what is happening in the community.*

Since children are very good at telling you what they want, it can be a challenge to encourage a child to think beyond his or her own interests. But children are natural



helpers and with guidance can have a positive impact on their classroom, school, or community. Caring about your community and offering helpful action is called a civic mindset. There are a number of ways children can practice how to be responsible and active members of their schools and communities.

## **What we know:**

Research shows that children are natural helpers. You can advance your child's helpful actions in school and community by telling them directly of your expectations ("I count on you to be kind to all your classmates") and asking them, "What can you do at school when a classmate gets teased?" This helps reinforce in your child a "can-do" attitude that they can make their schools and communities better ("I can do something to make a difference!")

## **Try this:**

Have some fun and create Responsibility Posters. Grab some colorful markers and paper or snuggle up in front of a screen and use drawing tools. Draw a chart with four boxes of responsibilities:

1. home
2. school
3. community
4. myself

Get the conversation going -- share some examples of responsibilities you have as an adult (like having nutritious food at home). Highlight community examples, like being informed and voting and being friendly with neighbors. You can also check out the PBS Parents tips on [how to raise a good citizen](#). Now ask your child about their responsibilities. Have a few ideas to start like being kind to other classmates at school and following traffic rules when biking in their community. The idea is not to list everything, but a few key areas that your child can act on.

## **For Fun:**

Use lots of color, emojis, and other artwork on the poster. The idea is to have fun and help your child start developing their civic mindset. When the poster is done, hang it on the refrigerator or on your child's bedroom door. Take a photo and use it as the background on a digital device. Be sure it is where your child and you will see it often. That way you can continue to talk about what they can do to make their schools and communities great places.