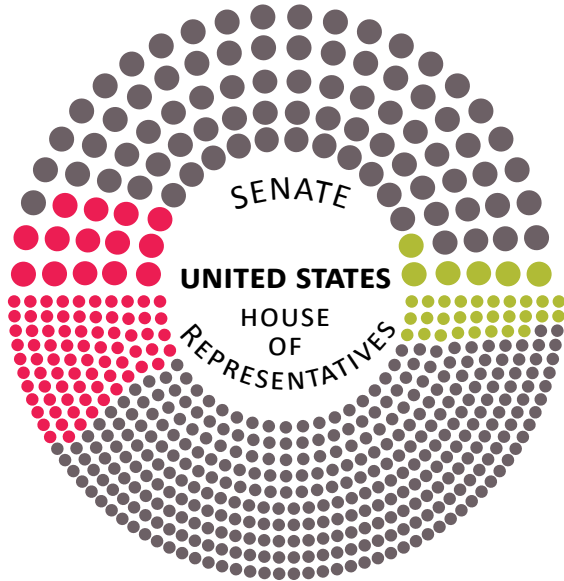


HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR PRETEEN DAUGHTER IN POLITICS



US WOMEN IN ELECTED OFFICE—THE FACTS

Women in the United States are dramatically **under-represented** in political office.



US Senate: 20 of 100 (14D, 6R)

US House of Representatives: 104 of 435 (76D, 28R)

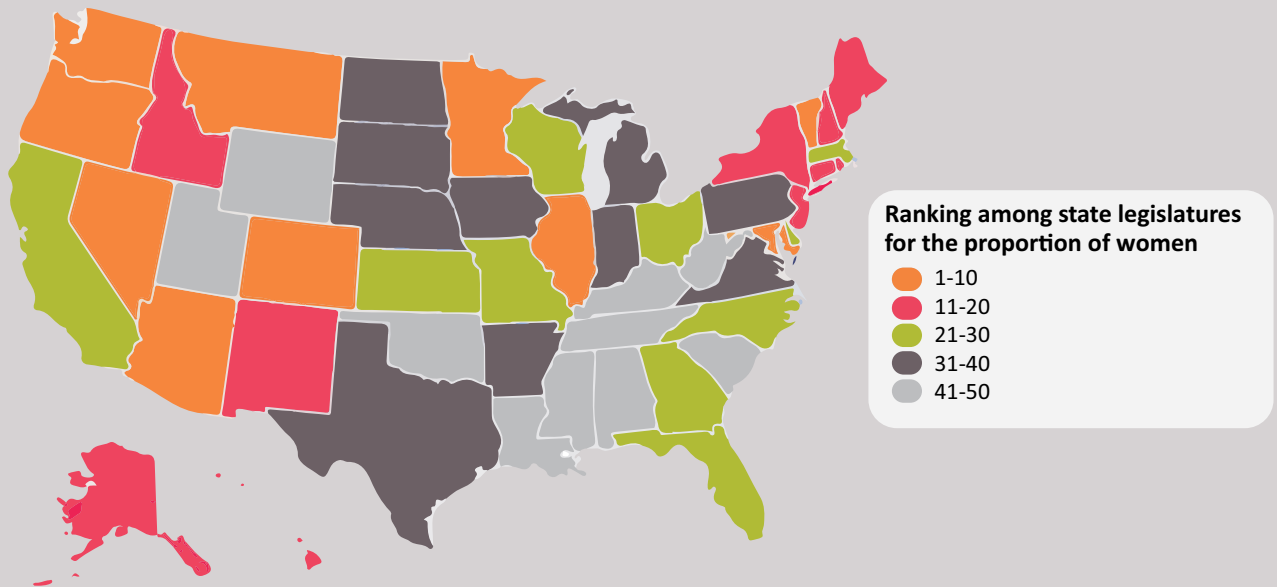
Governors: 6 of 50 (3D, 3R)



Mayors of the 100 largest US Cities: 19 of 100

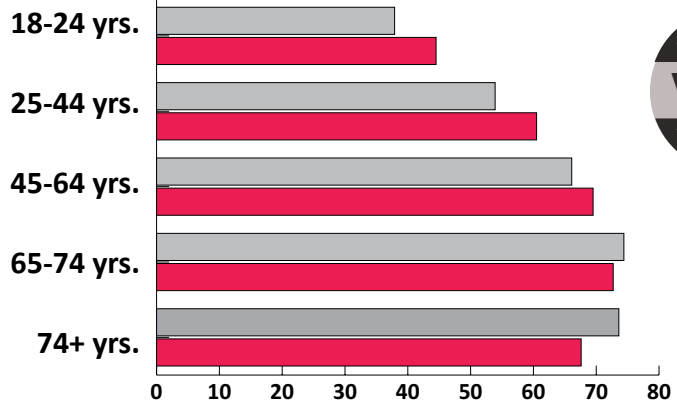


Best and worst states for women's political representation in the state legislature:



Women vote at higher rates than men in every age group except for people over 65.

(Percentage of Eligible Adult Population Who Reported Voting)



HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR PRE-TEEN DAUGHTER IN POLITICS — DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

How to use these guides:

During election years, and especially during a Presidential election, conversations about politics happen all around us: on social media, on television, in school, and as we see lawn signs and posters in our neighborhoods. Whether you actively discuss politics or not, your daughter absorbs information all the time. And whether or not she appears interested in the political candidates or issues being discussed, she is questioning what she sees and hears.

So let's talk about it! There is no better time than an election year to get your daughter engaged and thinking about the world around her. Through thoughtful conversations you can help your daughter develop her own opinions.

IGNITE designed these guides as a way to get your daughter engaged in politics and political issues in the least controversial way possible: by involving her peers. We've formatted these guides around the concept of a mother-daughter get together. (Please note, it is not essential that it be done this way, and you can always adapt the guides for your own personal use. There is no right or wrong, just the way that works best for you and your daughter.)

Get in the Know – Discussion Guides

Each guide is formatted by a theme, and includes conversation tips, goals, and an activity. Within each activity there are:

- Guiding questions: General questions you can pose to get the conversation started.
- Prompts to keep the conversation moving: Questions you can ask to elicit thoughts. You may come up with different ones, and that's okay too.
- Digging deeper: In some cases we have created a column of questions or information you can use to help girls probe more deeply into their answers. You do not have to use these responses, the key here is to help guide girls to think more about why they perceive the world the way they do.

Get in the Action – Activity Guides

Each guide is formatted by a theme, and includes potential outcomes and steps to conduct the activity. Please note that these activities are not differentiated by age and it's best to assess what's right for your daughter.



GET IN THE KNOW — LET’S GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

HOST A MOM/DAUGHTER DINNER

THEME: Women as political leaders (pre-teen)

From a very young age, girls and teenagers are aware that leadership, and especially political leadership, is a male dominated field. This renders it less likely for young women to imagine themselves as capable of political leadership. We can undo these expectations by having conversations that look at the implicit messages young women absorb about leadership.

Conversation tips:

For mothers facilitating the discussion, the key here is to remain as honest as possible about your own experience, and non-judgmental about the experiences of the girls in the room. It may be easier to have another mom do follow up questions for your daughter.

Goals:

- Girls understand that what they see and hear impacts their perception of women as leaders
- Girls are excited to support women who run for office

Start: show [photo](#) with heads of all the Presidents

Guiding questions	Prompts to keep the conversation moving	Digging deeper
What do you notice about all these Presidents?	Prompt them to think about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Race 	Why do you think that is?
When you think of electing a President how do you imagine that person looks? Do you imagine a man or a woman? Everyone throw out some adjectives to describe that person.	Prompt them to think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Race • Age • Clothing • Education • Income level 	When you see the image of a President in your head, does it make you feel like you could be that person?
Why do you think they we have all male Presidents and no female Presidents?	You might hear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Boys just think they are so much smarter than girls.” • “Boys think girls can’t be President.” • “Girls don’t feel confident enough to be President.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they act smarter? Do you think they really are smarter? • Why do you think boys feel that way? Is it what their parents tell them? Is it what they see on TV and in the movies and in social media? • Why do you think girls don't feel confident enough? What would help make girls feel like they could be President?
At your school, do you have mostly boys or girls running for school or class President?		Would you ever run for school or class President? Why or why not?
Do you think it matters that we have had no female President in the United States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be better to have a female President? • Why or why not? 	What messages does it send when girls your age, and even younger, have never seen a women President?



GET IN THE KNOW — LET'S GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

HOST A MOM/DAUGHTER DINNER

THEME: Dissecting Social Issues (teen and pre-teen)

Young girls and teenage girls notice problems in their communities all the time. Whether they are talking to you about it or not, they are thinking about what they can do to address these problems. This theme provides a forum to have a thoughtful conversation about any single social issue. Please note, almost any social issue will be emotionally loaded for the mothers, who may have strong opinions on the issues discussed.

Conversation tips:

The key here is that mothers keep their opinions to themselves – which will be harder than you think. We want our daughters to feel empowered to come up with their own opinions and their own solutions, and to understand that there are no right answers to any single problem. So check your opinions at the door, pick an issue, and get started!

Goals:

- Girls leave with a deeper understanding of how to dissect a social problem they see in their community
- Girls learn to come up with potential solutions to address issues they care about

Sample issue: Homelessness

Guiding questions	Prompts to keep the conversation moving
What has been your personal experience with <u>homelessness</u> ? Have you known anyone who has experienced the issue firsthand?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has having a firsthand experience changed your opinion?• Is it harder to have an opinion if you haven't known anyone who was homeless?
Why is the issue of <u>homelessness</u> important? Why does it matter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where do homeless people live? (In shelters or on street)• What's it like for homeless children? How does it impact their lives?• How do you feel when you see mentally ill or drug addicted homeless people on the street?
What do you think causes this problem?	Here are some things you can ask them about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poverty, losing jobs• Mental illness• Drug addiction/substance abuse• Trauma (and war veterans)
So it seems like there are lots of reasons for <u>homelessness</u> , so what can we do about it? Is there any way we can fix it? How would we do that?	Since there are lots of different types of people who are homeless, whatever solutions we come up with may be different for each type of person. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For families what might be the solution?• For substance abusers what might be the solution?• For mentally ill people what might be the solution?• For war veterans what might be the solution?• For poor people what might be the solution?

Suggested questions to help identify what your daughter cares about:

1. What bothers you most about what you see in your community?
2. What do you care most about?
3. If you could change one thing in your school (on your sports team, in clubs, at your after school program, etc.), what would it be?



GET IN THE ACTION — LET'S GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER FOR AN ISSUE YOUR DAUGHTER CARES ABOUT

THEME: Volunteer for an issue (teen and pre-teen)

Volunteering for an organization that works to solve, alleviate or advocate for an issue your daughter cares about is a great opportunity for her to see the impact she can make.

Goals:

- Girls see that they can make a difference in their community
- Girls learn about the components of a complex issue

Steps to conduct the activity:

Step 1: Decide what issue you want to volunteer for and why.

Tips: As you and your daughter make this decision, ask her – what is something you want to learn more about? Where can we help people?

Step 2: Look up the organizations that work to impact this issue and find out how to volunteer (there is always a link for ways to volunteer).

Tips: Before you go into the organization, think about what kinds of activities you might prefer doing. Each volunteer experience varies – based on location and potential issue impact. Some opportunities include: packing food at the Food Bank, serving meals at a shelter, painting houses, cleaning up beaches, or collecting donations.

Step 3: Schedule at least one time to volunteer together (and bring along some friends to join you).

Step 4: Debrief after the experience: What was hard about it? What did you like? How do you think we made an impact? Did you learn something new?



GET IN THE ACTION — LET'S GET INVOLVED

WATCH A DEBATE TOGETHER

Activity: Watch a debate together (teen and pre-teen)

A Presidential election year means that there will be televised debates throughout the Fall and until election day (the first Tuesday in November). Each debate typically has a specific theme and format, so check the schedule in advance and if you can only watch one, pick the one where the general subject interests your daughter the most. You can watch alone with your daughter, or invite another mother-daughter pair (or pairs) to attend.

Goals:

- Girls examine how candidates act and present themselves in public
- Girls learn about multiple issues and how candidates propose to address those issues
- Girls understand the importance of learning about candidates and their proposals before voting

Steps to conduct the activity:

Step 1: Before the Debate:

- Ask your daughter – do you know any of the candidates who are in the debate today?
- If she does – what do you know about them?
- If she doesn't – what do you think people discuss at debates?
- Frame what the topics will be during the debate— are they discussing education, women's rights, equal pay?

Step 2: During the Debate:

We all have pretty strong opinions, but during the debate try to refrain from commenting on a particular candidate's response, the style of the debaters, or your opinions about the candidates or topics being discussed. You want the girls to develop their own responses.

Step 3: After the Debate:

First, turn off the debate before you hear the party rebuttals. You want to have a conversation with the girls about what they heard and perceived about the candidates and their positions on the issues. This isn't about who won or lost the debate, but about who your daughters think made the most sensible points.

Here are some guiding questions to frame your post-debate discussion:

- Stylistically, what did you think were the biggest differences between the two candidates? Which candidate came off as a better leader, and why? If you had to describe each candidate using 2-3 adjectives, what would they be?
- What were the most important issues the candidates discussed in the debate? Where did each candidate demonstrate more (or less) expertise? Did you think they had good solutions to the problems that were discussed?
- Overall, what are the criteria you would use to decide which candidate to vote for? Is it economic policy, social issues, foreign policy, something else?
- Which of the two candidates won your vote based on your priorities?

