

Talking to Children/Students about Civil Unrest and Political Upheaval

Statement from Tony Thurmond, CA Superintendent of Schools:

Like so many, I am struggling to process today's violent attack on democracy at the U.S. Capitol while celebrating an inspiring display of democracy in Georgia.

We can choose which future we want for our youth, and today must reinforce our commitment to using the power of education to end hate and bigotry, and to empower communities that have been made vulnerable by systemic inequity.

History will show our students that until today the peaceful transfer of power has been a bedrock tradition in the nation every election since its founding. As we approach our next president's inauguration, I implore all Americans to move forward peacefully and respectfully.

Our students and children are watching closely, and they deserve the absolute best from us.

- Tony Thurmond, CA Superintendent of Schools

Resources for

- [Processing Emotions/Response](#)
- [Framing the Discussion around Civics](#)

Processing Emotions/Responses

	Grade Level(s)	Resource	Source	Notes
Specific to Attack on U.S. Capitol	PK-12	Resources for Teachers on the Days After the Attack on the U.S. Capitol	Beyond the Stoplight	Offers concrete, actionable advice, and guidance specific to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers/students of various racial groups • processing events in a distance learning context
	PK-12	Responding to the Insurrection at the US Capitol	Facing History	Contains high quality guidance for both the short term and the long term
	PK-12	Talking to Kids About the Attack on the Capitol NEA	NEA	Written for educators, contains advice from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
	PK-8	How to Process a Scary Day for the Nation with Your Kids	the LAist	Includes insightful guidance and specific suggestions from therapist Thea Monyeé
General Resources Related to Supporting Traumatic Events	PK-12	When Bad Things Are Happening	Teaching Tolerance	Suggestions for navigating a discussion with students as news unfolds. These recommendations build on the Psychological First Aid (PFA) framework, developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: “ Listen. Protect. Connect—Model & Teach. ” They also include suggestions from the American School Counselor Association and The Child Mind Institute .
	Birth - 6 years old	Sesame Street in Communities	Sesame Street	Provides resources for families and children birth- 6years old. These resources include videos, conversation starters and activities around a variety of topics including: Community Violence Offering Comfort

				Traumatic Experiences Age by Age Strategies
	PK-12	Helping Your Child Recover from Trauma	Sonoma County Office of Education	Reminds adults of possible signs of distress and how to support a child going through distress. It is also translated to Spanish.
	PK-12	When Disaster Strikes: Talking to Children about Traumatic Events	The Center for Parenting Education	Includes descriptions of common childhood indicators of stress/trauma at various age levels

Framing the Discussion Around Civics

Grade Level(s)	Resource	Source	Notes
PK -12	Now Is A Good Time To Talk To Kids About Civics	NPR	Quick primer from NPR's Life Kit that offers guidance for talking with children about the recent election.
PK-8	Inauguration Apprehension: How to Help Children Express Their Feelings in Times of Change	Free Spirit Publishing	Offers seven suggestions for helping children promote healthy expression of their feelings related to the upcoming inauguration.
3-12	Using Effective Strategies for Teaching Controversial Issues	iCivics	A guide for educators that explains the need for discussing controversial issues in the classroom, and highlights five effective strategies for doing so, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Summaries of each <input type="checkbox"/> Goals & skills they develop <input type="checkbox"/> Materials/Prep Needed <input type="checkbox"/> Advantages of each <input type="checkbox"/> Suggested extension activities
4-12	Teaching Controversy	Teaching Tolerance	Emphasizes the importance of engaging in classroom discussions of controversial issues. Provides clear, concrete advice on how to structure and facilitate such conversations
4-12	Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)	teachinghistory.org	SAC provides an alternative to the "debate mindset" by shifting the goal from winning classroom discussions to understanding alternative positions and formulating historical syntheses. The structure of the protocol demands students listen to each other in new ways and guides them into a world of complex and controversial ideas.
6-12	How Do You Feel About Living Through This Moment in History?"	KQED	Online discussion activity based on video prompt