

Active and Engaged Citizenship

Definition

Someone who is an active and engaged citizen is someone who has a sense of civic duty, feeling of social connection to their community, confidence in their abilities to effect change, as well as someone who is engaged in civic behaviors (Zaff, Boyd, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010). When young people are actively engaged in improving the well-being of their communities, they experience positive developmental benefits (Lerner, 2004; Levine & Youniss, 2006; Zaff & Michelsen, 2001).

Special Note

This instrument is recommended to be used with students in grades 8, 9, and 10.

Related Indicator

- Sense of Community

Active and Engaged Citizenship (AEC)

Please circle the answer that best describes your feelings toward each statement.

	How important is each of the following to you in your life?	Not Important				Extremely Important
1.	Helping to reduce hunger and poverty in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Helping to make sure all people are treated fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Helping to make the world a better place to live in.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Helping other people.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities).	1	2	3	4	5
	How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
6.	I believe I can make a difference in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I often think about doing things so that people in the future can have things better.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It is important to me to contribute to my community and society.	1	2	3	4	5
	How well does each of these statements describe you?	Not Well				Very Well
9.	When I see someone being taken advantage of, I want to help them.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	When I see someone being treated unfairly, I feel sorry for them.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel sorry for other people who don't have what I have.	1	2	3	4	5

	If you found out about a problem in your community, how well do you think you would be able to do each of the following activities?	I Definitely Can't	I Probably Can't	Maybe	I Probably Can	I Definitely Can
12.	Contact a newspaper, radio, or TV talk show to express your opinion on the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Contact an elected official about the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Contact or visit someone in government who represents your community.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Write an opinion letter to a local newspaper.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Express your views in front of a group of people.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Sign an email or a written petition.	1	2	3	4	5
	How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
18.	Adults in my town or city listen to what I have to say.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Adults in my town or city make me feel important.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	In my town or city, I feel like I matter to people.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	In my neighborhood, there are lots of people who care about me.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	If one of my neighbors saw me do something wrong, he or she would tell one of my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	My teachers really care about me.	1	2	3	4	5
	How often do you do each of the following activities?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
24.	Help make your city or town a better place to live in.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Help at your place of worship.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Help a neighbor.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Help at your school.	1	2	3	4	5

	How often have you participated in each of the following service activities over the last 12 months?	Never	Once a month or less	A couple times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
28.	Volunteering your time (at a hospital, daycare, food bank, youth program, community service agency).	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	Mentoring/peer advising.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	Tutoring.	1	2	3	4	5	6

During the last 12 months, how many times have you been a leader in a group or organization?				
Never	Once	Twice	3-4 times	5 or more times

Source: Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010.