

Patriotism

.....Has faced a steep decline among young adults over the last decade, and now sits as a record low.

Why does this matter? Pride in national identity is lowest among those 18-24 and illustrates the fracture between young Americans and older generations. In the most recent Gallup Poll, Americans 55 and older were nearly 3 times more likely to be extremely prideful of their nationality than younger generations.

Overall, 39% of U.S. adults say they are “extremely proud” to be an American in the most recent Gallup poll. Meanwhile only 18% of those aged 18-34 said the same compared to 40% aged 35-54 and 50% of those 55 and over. By comparison, just 10 years ago in 2013, 85% of those aged 18-29 said they were extremely proud to be an American.

The big picture is that the percentage of U.S. adults of all ages remain at a record low. Looking over the last two decades, the percentage of Americans expressing true pride intensified after 9/11 but began a decline in 2005 and that decline continues today.

So where do we go from here? It starts at home, in the classroom and within our communities.

Patriotism means love and devotion for one’s country. It can be shown in a variety of ways, including thoughts, words, and actions. Here are some activities and conversations to help kids learn about patriotism and the different ways people can demonstrate it:

- Partner with teachers who want their students to learn about citizenship.
- Include teachers to discuss the meaning of the stars, stripes, and colors of the flag.

Americanism

Mid-Winter Presentation

- When walking through your neighborhood or on a family trip, see how many flags you can find. Take pictures and share on social media.
- Show children the correct way to display and fold a flag. Guidance may be available from local scout troop, military installation, or veteran's organization.
- Talk to kids about **ways to honor veterans**.
- Read the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Talk about why the writers decided to write what they did. Let your children pretend they are starting their own country and create their own framework of rights and responsibilities.
- Take children with you if you vote in person or explain voting by mail. Talk about why the voting process is essential.
- Make a family tree. Talk about relatives who serve in the armed forces, past and present. Talk about ancestors and why they chose to immigrate to the United States. Personalizing history makes it more relevant.
- Learn the Pledge of Allegiance. Talk about the meaning of the words.
- On patriotic holidays, like Independence Day, discuss the reasons for the celebrations or observances. Teach the differences between Veterans Day and **Memorial Day**.
- Lead by example: Be a positive role model by demonstrating patriotic values in your actions and attitudes, Show respect for your country, its laws and its institutions. Engage in acts of kindness, tolerance and civic responsibility to inspire children to follow suit.

- REMEMBER, while teaching patriotism, it is important to promote critical thinking, thoroughness and global awareness as well as love and respect for our country.