

## Resource – How to Talk About SDGs

Title	Scope	Age Group
How to talk about SDGs with kids?	To initiate the discussion with your students / kids as teachers or parents	Pupils aged 8 – 12



With 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg making headlines with her recent UN speech on climate change, you may have noticed that kids today are more environmentally and socially conscious.

If you are a parent / guardian / elder sibling / teacher having kids around, you know that they love to ask, “WHY?” about everything.

Kids are seeing headlines, especially as they relate to climate, equality, and clean energy, and you can use a framework for having conversations about what’s going on in the world today.

The good news is, as you probably know, that kids are natural learners and don’t have information that needs updating, unlike adults!

Why talk about the SDGs with kids? This is an important discussion because while they may not know it yet, the next generation stand to lose the most from our current global challenges and they may have the answers that we haven't found yet.

Talk to your kids about the headlines and be proactive in helping them know what's at stake for their sustainable futures.

Here are some tips for talking to your kids about the SDGs:

### 1. Ask what they think people can agree on

You might start by asking them what they think they can agree on with a sibling or other classmates at school. Then ask them to consider what they do to make the world a better place. Do they share their toys? Can they express their feelings without fighting?

See what the kids come up with on their own! Depending how old they are, you can ask them to use their imagination to think of what every country in the world might be able to agree on.

## What Are the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals are the **world's to-do list for people and the planet** by 2030.

Adopted by **193 countries** in 2015, the 17 goals measure our collective progress against the world's most pressing challenges.

They are an urgent call for action for **public, private, and social sectors** to come together in global partnership.





## 2. Explain what the United Nations is

If your kids have been lucky enough to not have lived through any major catastrophes, like a war, you could ask them to imagine what they would do if all their possessions were broken in a big fight. The idea is to bring up a sense of empathy for what a post-WWII world might have been like, as the United Nations began in 1945 to set the conditions for world peace and prevent future world wars. This might also be an opportunity to get out a map or globe and talk about geography, and then compare that to what the Earth looks like from space: no countries, no boundaries. You could mention that the Apollo astronauts took a [photo of the earth from the Moon](#), which is considered a pivotal point in modern environmental movement.

Ask them: What does getting along with your friends mean to you? How do you stop fights after they have started? Wouldn't it be easier to think about how we can prevent disagreements in the first place? You can ask them to name things that might be useful, like having rules (such as on how to share toys, like how countries can agree on sharing water sources) or emotional skills like listening to other people's points of view.

## 3. Share the SDG framework

Here's an "easy read" version of the SDGs, in simple English that makes it easy to understand the SDGs for non-native English speakers, kids, or anyone unfamiliar with the topic: <https://www.iddcconsortium.net/resources-tools/agenda-2030-sdgs-easy-read-version>

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's to-do list for people and planet. We all have tasks we need to do and a checklist to get through. Just like that, 193 nations came together and agreed on one common list for all of us that help make the planet and our communities stronger.



#### 4. Ask them to pick an SDG (or two) that is their favorite

See what matters to them, and have a discussion! Here's a handy list of the 17 goals to refer to:

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|---|--|
| 1-No Poverty                              | 10-Reduced Inequalities                    |
| 2-Zero Hunger                             | 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities      |
| 3-Good Health and Wellbeing               | 12- Responsible Consumption and Production |
| 4-Quality Education                       | 13-Climate Action                          |
| 5-Gender Equality                         | 14-Life Below Water                        |
| 6-Clean Water and Sanitation              | 15-Life on Land                            |
| 7-Affordable and Clean Energy             | 16-Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions  |
| 8-Decent Work and Economic Growth         | 17-Partnerships for the Goals              |
| 9-Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure |  |

Ask: why is that SDG their favorite? What makes them care about it? You could also ask about which of them don't make sense.

#### 5. Skill development: What's needed?

For "extra credit" you could ask: what skills do they want to develop to be better at advancing the goal they care about? Listening to other people, learning about the topic, or maybe studying science to develop clean energy? Public speaking skills to talk about the topic that matters to them or lead a presentation at school?



### Some examples:

#### *9 year old, 11 year old children discuss the SDGs*

Jon, 9 year old, was quick to make the connection between the SDGs and recent headlines. He felt very fortunate for what he has and informed on what others need. He also asked about SDGs he didn't understand, like Quality Education. He was engaged. He was empathetic. It was a meaningful conversation which could happen in more homes and help shape the future.

Faisal, 11 year old commented: "SDG #8 is important – everyone has the opportunity to get a job. Number 13, climate change, is important: The fate of the world depends on it." He agreed: "No one's really trying to stop climate change, and that's stupid." He added: "Trash kills turtles and I like turtles!" referring to life in the water.

Noah, a 9 year old who cares about the SDGs. is a lover of nature and animals. He regularly visits national parks and zoos. His favorite SDG? Life on Land (number 15)! He was asked to write in his journal about his thoughts on the global goals. He wrote: "I think the Sustainable Development Goals are important because they are justice for everyone. They are made by more than one country so every one of the 193 countries that agreed on these goals thinks that they are absolutely fair. I 100% agree with the goals that protect animals. My favorite goal is Life on Land. Some of the most fascinating creatures can do some cool things on land. You can also stop people from poaching. If you do, your favorite animal's population can rise. You can also enforce the law to make sure people don't poach."

What are your kids saying about the SDGs? What kind of world do they want to live in?  
Start a conversation at the dinner table – the world's to-do list needs all of our help.

**Go Goals!**