

HANDS-ON JUSTICE PROJECT: Grades K–2

The *Hands-On Justice Project* engages K–2 students in learning experiences that connect social studies concepts to real-world action. Each project combines inquiry, creative making, and analysis of Library of Congress primary sources to help young learners explore what justice looks like in their world.



Developed at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the series draws on teacher–researcher partnerships to design developmentally appropriate approaches to justice-oriented social studies inquiry.

ADVOCACY SIGNS: Speaking Up for Justice in Our Community

GET STARTED

In this project, K–2 students explored how people use art and words to advocate for justice in their communities. Students designed signs highlighting issues they cared about and shared them to inspire action and raise awareness within their school community. Students investigated the driving questions: ***How can we use our voices to advocate for what is fair? Why would people speak up for the Earth?***

After analyzing Library of Congress resources showing protest and advocacy signs, students discussed what made each message powerful and persuasive. They noticed how color, images, and short phrases help people share their voices for justice.

READY, SET, SUPPLIES!

For this project you'll need:

- [Advocacy Sign Planning Handout](#)
- Poster Board or Cardstock
- Markers or Crayons
- Decorations (e.g., pipe cleaners, yarn, construction paper, tissue paper, glitter)
- Wooden Sticks (e.g., paint stirrers)
- Glue or Tape

TRY IT OUT IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Analyze Signs: Study examples of advocacy signs and discuss what makes each one persuasive.



- Identify Issues: Invite students to identify fairness or environmental issues in their classroom, school, or community.
- Create Advocacy Signs: Have students create their own signs that share a message.
- Stage a Protest: Display the finished signs and invite students to share them with other classes, explaining their message and why it matters.

STEPS FOR MAKING ADVOCACY SIGNS

1. Distribute the Advocacy Sign Template for students to plan their message and design.
2. Review examples of persuasive signs and discuss how short words, colors, and images make a message stand out.
3. Have students transfer their design onto poster board or cardstock.
4. Attach the sign to a wooden stick or paint stirrer using glue or tape.

STANDARDS SPOTLIGHT

This project supports the **Civics and Government** strand across the K–2 grade band, such as:

- Grade 1: Understand how people engage and participate in the community.
- Grade 2: Explain how various Indigenous, religious, gender, and racial groups advocate for freedom and equality. (NC Dept. of Public Instruction, 2021)

RESOURCES & LINKS

Teachers can explore all project materials and related resources:

- [Advocacy Signs Classroom Materials](#)
- [Library of Congress Collection: Women of Protest](#)
- [Library of Congress: WPA Posters](#)

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A kindergarten student holds an advocacy sign that reads “Justice for All.”