

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.

PUPPET PEACEMAKERS: Exploring Justice in the Community

GET STARTED

In this project, K–2 students used puppets to explore classroom and community problems and ways people can make things more fair. Students investigated the driving question: ***How can we use our voices to advocate for what is fair?***

After analyzing [Library of Congress resources](#) showing people working together, students discussed what fairness looks like and learned different ways people can resolve problems. They then created puppets to act out how people can use their voices and actions to make fair choices and solve problems together.

READY, SET, SUPPLIES!

For this project you’ll need:

- Puppet Template
- Crayons or Markers
- Wooden Stick (e.g., popsicle sticks or dowels)
- Glue
- Decorations (pipe cleaners, yarn, construction paper, googly eyes, and glitter)
- [Vignettes](#) for discussions from [Children Discovering Justice Curriculum](#)
- Puppet Theater

TRY IT OUT IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Analyze Vignettes: Guide students to identify classroom or community problems using the vignettes as inspiration.



- Brainstorm Solutions: Discuss fair ways to respond or speak up when something feels unfair.
- Create Puppets: Have students design characters who can model how to solve problems together. (See Below)
- Perform Puppet Shows: Students share short skits showing how people can work toward fairness or solve problems collaboratively.

STEPS FOR MAKING THE PUPPETS

1. Print one Puppet Template on cardstock for each student.
2. Color and decorate using crayons, markers, yarn, or googly eyes.
3. Cut out the puppet, trimming around any added decorations.
4. Glue to a wooden stick.

STANDARDS SPOTLIGHT

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

- Kindergarten: Understand that people work together to create and follow rules.
- Grade 1: Understand how people engage with and participate in the community. (NC Dept. of Public Instruction, 2021)

RESOURCES & LINKS

Teachers can explore all project materials and related resources:

- [Puppet Peacemakers Classroom Resources](#)
- [Library of Congress “Puppet Power” Activity Kit](#)
- [Library of Congress: Community Helpers, Leaders, and Primary Sources](#)
- [Children Discovering Justice Curriculum](#)



Puppets from the Hands-On Justice Project show how people can work together to promote justice in the community.

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