

WHAT IF I CAN'T READ VERY WELL?

Ballots are often hard to read. However, most polling places will let you take someone with you to read for you.

HOW CAN I DECIDE ON MY CHOICES?

Voting requires some study. Sometimes you will vote on new laws for your community. Other elections are about choosing the right people as leaders. You may need some help making your decisions. There are many places to get help. Don't forget that every citizen must make his/her own choices. Another person cannot make you vote for something or someone you don't like.

Here are some ways you can learn whom and what you want to vote for:

- ◆ Talk to teachers, parents, friends and neighbors about their choices;
- ◆ Listen to television and radio news;
- ◆ Listen to what the people running for office (called candidates) have to say;
- ◆ Keep a notebook about voting and candidates.

**REMEMBER:
CITIZENS VOTE TO KEEP
THEIR FREEDOM. VOTING
IS A SERIOUS DUTY AND
PRIVILEGE. ASK SOMEONE
TO HELP YOU TO PREPARE
TO VOTE.**

The Arc of Tennessee values diversity and does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender or level of disability.



151 Athens Way, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37228
1-800-835-7077 - 615-248-5878
Fax: 615-248-5879
www.thearctn.org

*This project is funded under an agreement with
the State of Tennessee.*

03/11/11



**Wants You to Know
about**



VOTING

WHAT IS VOTING?

Voting means making choices. Citizens of the United States and Tennessee must choose which people they want to make decisions for them. Obviously, we can't all go to Washington or Nashville to run our own government. We can't all go to city hall to make decisions for ourselves. For that reason, we vote. We choose people to decide for us. This is a big important job. We must choose well. We want to be happy with our choices. We make choices that will affect the whole United States and the state of Tennessee. Voting is a serious responsibility.

Citizens vote by marking ballots. Citizens use voting machines to mark their ballots. People at the voting place will show you how to use the voting machine.

Some organizations offer training to people with disabilities to learn how to vote by showing them what the ballots look like and practicing with them.

WHO CAN VOTE?

In the United States, citizens age 18 and over can vote. Were you born in the United States? Are your parents citizens? Or, did you take a test to become a citizen?

If you answered "yes" to one of these questions, then you are a citizen, and you can vote.

WHAT IS A CITIZEN?

A citizen is a person who lives in a country and enjoys its privileges. A good citizen is concerned about his country. A United States citizen enjoys special freedoms.

What do you have to do to enjoy freedom? Citizens have duties. Some of the duties of United States citizens are:

- ◆ Citizens are expected to obey the laws. If they don't like the laws, they can vote to change them.
- ◆ Citizens over age 18 are expected to vote. Any citizen of the United States 18 years old or older can vote.

HOW AND WHEN CAN I VOTE?

All states require voters to register. To find out how and when to register to vote, call the city or county clerk or the League of Women Voters, listed in the telephone directory.

When you call the city or county clerk, ask them whether they allow someone to help you read the ballot. Ask them also whether they will allow you to register by mail.

National elections take place every two years. Members of Congress and one-third of the Senators are elected then. The President is elected every four years. The date for national elections is always on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years. Some cities have chosen to hold their elections at other times. You can ask the city clerk about your particular city.

Ask your county clerk's office about early voting because in some elections there are designated days when voters can vote before election day.

WHO CAN HELP ME IF I DECIDE TO VOTE?

- ◆ Your teacher is a good person to ask for help.
- ◆ A parent is also often eager to help.
- ◆ The person who takes you to the doctor may be willing to help.
- ◆ Neighbors and friends sometimes help.
- ◆ Call the League of Women Voters for help. It is an organization that helps people vote.
- ◆ Get some phone numbers to call for a ride at the last minute, in case your helper can't take you to vote.

WHAT IF I AM DENIED MY RIGHT TO VOTE AT THE POLL?

Ask to complete a provisional ballot and do not leave without completing one. Immediately contact the Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee at 1-800-342-1660.