

BUILDING A PARENT NATION ACTION GUIDE



**Foster Community
Forge Collective Identity
Fight for Change**



*“We know the coordinates leading to
that North Star. If we follow them,
I believe we can get there.
But, of course, knowledge and beliefs
are not action. What we do
matters more than anything else.”*

—Dr. Dana Suskind



ACTION GUIDE



Now that you've finished *Parent Nation*, you may feel called to help build one. Good news! This guide can help.

The first and most important step in building a nation that works with and for parents is a mindset shift. Parents are a beautifully diverse group, bringing our own lenses and lived experiences to the sacred task of raising children. But we're also a collective—bound by a fierce love for the humans we're raising and a boundless hope for their futures. That collective identity can inspire us to grant all parents empathy, allyship and a sense of belonging. I may not look or live like you do, but I love like you do. And that makes us partners.

This collective identity gives us strength, and we can use that strength to ensure we receive the systemic support we all need. Parents cannot and should not be expected to go it alone when engaged in the important work of raising children. We can, and should, invite our workplaces, communities and country to provide parents the necessary supports so that children are nurtured and invested in from their earliest days of life. The science demands as much. Our children deserve as much.

*"The promise of America is
to grant her children the ability
to fulfill their natural promise,
to let them learn and grow and flourish,
to allow them to become productive
members of their communities
and society at large."*

—Parent Nation



If you feel called to create change on behalf of parents and children, you may consider one of the following paths:

- Visit ParentNation.org to learn about organizations around the country working on behalf of parents and children. If you're able, you can find one to support with your time or donation.
- Read and sign on to the Parent Nation Ideals.
- Share your story on ParentNation.org
- Use your social media platforms to share the work of organizations working on behalf of parents and children and invite others to do the same.
- Create a parent advisory board in your community spaces (your workplace, your house of worship, your school district) to ensure all parents' voices and needs are being equally heard.
- Talk to parents in your neighborhood, town or city about their experiences and bring their concerns and ideas to your local elected officials.
- Conduct a survey of parents in your workplace to find out what supports would most benefit them and share the results with leadership.
- Write a letter to the editor of a local or national newspaper advocating for a project or policy that supports parents and children.
- When elections come around, research policies and candidates with an eye toward what's best for parents and children. Some organizations that help with that research include Zero To Three; MomsRising, National At-Home Dad Network, First Five Years Fund.
- Vote!
- Form a book club to discuss "Parent Nation," or suggest the book to your existing group. (We've even created a discussion guide on page 266.)
- Create or join a Parent Village. Parent Villages are small groups of parents who come together to support one another, identify and discuss the needs of families in their community and make a plan to get those needs met. Your Village may be a group of coworkers, a collection of parents from your child's school, a group of your neighbors, or fellow parishioners at your house of worship. Any combination of up to 10 committed change agents will do! You can find everything you need, including a suggested curriculum for your Village meetings, at ParentNation.org/Villages.