

# Engaged Citizenship | ETHICAL DECISIONS

## PAPERS, PLEASE: PARENT IMPACT GUIDE

Age 14+ | 1+ Hours

*"When people connect with the game, it's not really the mechanics. People [like the] characters, or the events that have you make tough decisions. You know, I wrote it, but I only get something from the randomised, procedural gameplay."*

--Lucas Pope, Creator, *Papers, Please*



### ABOUT PAPERS, PLEASE

The country of Arstotzka has regained control of Grestin and now the player been picked from the October Labor Lottery to work at the new border control. The only job in the game is to follow the law and make the decisions the player thinks is best. However, well-meaning travelers may not always have the appropriate documentation and there are also spies, terrorists, and criminals trying to get through. For more information, visit: <http://papersplea.se/>

### THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Ethical Decisions

Ethics refers to moral principles that govern what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, and benefits to society; fairness; or specific virtues. It is specifically concerned with behavior, and is not completely about morality or what is socially acceptable alone. In *Papers, Please*, the story of border enforcement makes for an interesting context to practice applying ethical strategies and experiencing outcomes. In the beginning, only Arstotzkans are allowed entry, but as the game progresses foreigners are allowed entry provided they have the necessary documents. Throughout the game players will find terrorists, smugglers, and spies who want to enter the city, and it is up to the player to decide to follow the law or not. The only tools available are the primitive booth inspection materials, but the player's usage of them is his or her choice.

#### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Challenge your child to play *Papers, Please* and think about the ethical decisions and decision-making. What happens when playing with different models for making choices? Did you discuss the values that inform your own decision-making with your child and ask them to consider why they make the choices they do during tough situations? Use this guide and the Player Impact Guide to become familiar with *Papers, Please*.

#### DISCUSS THE GAME

... *the gameplay*

- What do you like about *Papers, Please* and what model of ethics does it allow? [+2]
- What models of ethical decision-making did portray? What seemed to motivate that? [+2]
- Was there any point in time that your own model for decision-making was different than what the game saw as acceptable and why do you think that was? [+3]

... *the game's impact*

- What did you learned about ethical decision-making in this game? [+1]
- Why is it important to consider the ethics of your decisions? What happens when you don't? [+3]

#### INTERACT WITH THE GAME

- Have your child pick two game achievements and describe how they were earned and what they mean. [+1]
- Have your child setup two challenges, and watch as they complete them. [+2]
- Play the game yourself, and complete the "Game Basics" section of the player Impact Guide. [+2]
- Solve one challenge that your child sets up for you to complete with their help. [+2]

#### SHARE THE GAME

- Post a positive reflection on the CGI Facebook page: <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact> [+2]
- Engage in conversations with other parents about your experience using the guide and playing the game. [+2]
- Host a "Game Slam" event, using these and other challenge questions you create. [+3]

**Family Challenge:** Play *Papers, Please* with your child. Every time a person in the game comes up with an invalid document and an excuse, decide together which decision would be the most ethically correct one. Post it to YouTube, and share the link on the Center for Games & Impact Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact>.