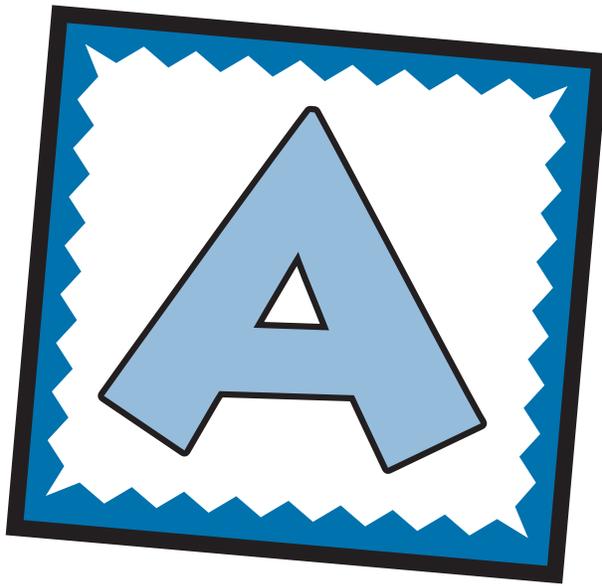
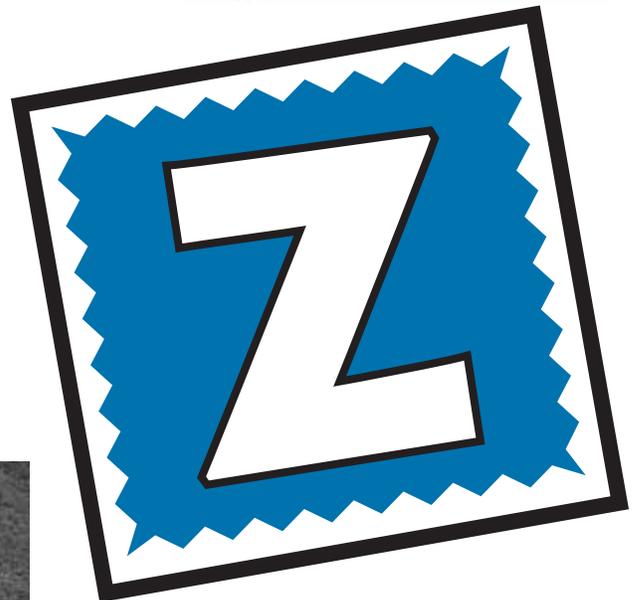


From...



to...



What Kids Need  
To Know to be Good  
Durham County  
Citizens



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# Dear Kids

*We hope you will read and enjoy From A to Z, A Guide to Durham County Government For Kids. After reading the book, try to answer the questions on page 14 to test how much you have learned.*

*Learning about the county you live in will help make you a good citizen. Congratulations, you are on your way to becoming a County Government Scholar!*



This publication was produced through the County Manager's Office of Public Information. Comments and suggestions are welcome, and should be sent to the County Manager's Office, 200 East Main Street, Durham, NC 27701, (919) 560-0000, e-mail: [public\\_information@durhamcountync.gov](mailto:public_information@durhamcountync.gov).

Translation provided by Interpreter's Link,  
**Professional Translation & Interpretation Services,**  
P.O. Box 301, Durham, NC 27702.

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This publication was printed on recycled paper.*

Revised: 6/2008

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## Animals

Did you know that Durham County has a special home for animals that are lost, without a family, or sick? It is called the Durham County Animal Shelter. At the animal shelter, there are people who feed and take care of the animals. There are all kinds of animals at the shelter, but most of them are cats and dogs. Sometimes

there are even rabbits. You can actually **adopt** or “take a pet home to keep” if you promise to take good care of it.

The animal shelter is just one of the many good things or “**services**” that Durham County government provides for your family and neighbors. As you read on,



you'll learn about other county services and the special people that make them happen.

## Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners is a group of people that make very important decisions about services to provide for the people who live in a county. Durham County has five

commissioners on its board. Your parents, guardians, neighbors, and adult citizens decide who will be on the Board of Commissioners by participating in an important contest called an

election. You'll learn more about elections later in this book. Ask a grown-up you know to name the five commissioners on Durham County's Board of Commissioners.



## Budget

A budget is all the **money** a county collects and spends for the services provided for people who live in a county. The Board of Commissioners decides every year how much **money** is needed to pay for the services. Durham County has a budget of over six hundred million dollars (\$600,000,000). That may

seem like enough money to pay for everything a county needs, but it is not, just like you may not have enough money in your piggy bank to buy a toy or game you really want. If you wonder where the money come from that makes up the budget, you'll find out when you get to the letter “T”.



## Citizen

A citizen is a person who lives in a particular city, town, state or county. A citizen can be young or old, a girl or a boy. If you live in Durham County, North Carolina, you are a citizen of Durham County.

Your family and friends who live in Durham are also citizens of Durham County. Did you know that Durham County has over two hundred sixty-one thousand (261,000) citizens?

## County Manager

The County Manager is hired by the Board of Commissioners to make sure the decisions the commissioners make are carried out. To help you understand, let's pretend there is a school called

Durham County. The County Manager is the principal. Does your principal teach all the classes at your school? Of course not. The



principal, just like the County Manager, hires people to help him. The County Manager's helpers are not called teachers, however. They are called **Department Heads.**

## Courthouse



The courthouse is the building in Durham County where the Board of Commissioners and the County Manager work. Not all Department Heads and county services are located in the courthouse. Some services are located in other buildings. Just think, it would not make sense to keep all the animals that are lost or

sick in the courthouse. That would be silly! So the county has other buildings, like the animal shelter, for some of its services. The Durham County courthouse is located at 200 East Main Street in downtown Durham. It is easy to recognize because it has three shiny brass doors and a statue of a soldier in the front.

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## Deputy Sheriff

A Deputy Sheriff is a county worker that helps to keep Durham County safe. A deputy is like a police officer. Deputy Sheriffs are easy to recognize because they wear a brown uniform with a badge and a hat. You may have seen a deputy sheriff in a car with a blue light on top.

The deputy often patrols the streets of Durham. Deputies also visit schools to teach kids about the dangers of using drugs. A deputy must go to a special school called the **Sheriff's Academy**



to learn how to be a good officer. Do you think you would like to be a deputy when you grow up?

## Elections

An election is like a contest. Citizens who want to be on the Board of Commissioners have to sign up at the **Board of Elections** office to be in the election. Once they sign up, they are called **candidates**.

Your parents, guardians, neighbors and adult citizens must then decide which candidates would do the best job of governing Durham County. They do this by a process called **voting**. You'll

learn more about voting later in this book. Elections for the Board of County Commissioners are held every four years, the same year that a new president is elected.



## Emergency 911

Emergency **9-1-1** is the number you call on the telephone when you or your family is in danger. For example, if a fire starts at your home, if someone breaks into your house, or if someone is hurt really badly, you should call 9-1-1. When you call 9-1-1, an

operator will answer. Don't be afraid. Take a big breath and tell the operator what the problem is. The operator will send a deputy, policeman, fireman or ambulance to help you and your family. Never play when calling 9-1-1.



## Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal is a fireman. The Fire Marshal puts out fires and teaches people how to be safe from fires. The Durham County Fire Marshal's Office has a special friend named “**Sparky**”. “Sparky” is a friendly dog that helps to teach kids about fire safety. What should you do if your clothes were to catch on

fire? The Fire Marshal says you should **stop, drop, and roll**.

In Durham County, the **law** says that citizens have to get permission before burning garbage. The Fire Marshal gives permission to burn garbage once a citizen signs up for a permit.

## Garbage

Do you know what garbage is? Garbage is trash or something you want to throw away.

**Solid Waste** is another name for garbage. Durham County has special places called **container sites** where citizens can dump their garbage. Some garbage can be

used again or **recycled**. Soda cans, plastic bottles, glass jars and newspapers can be recycled to make new things.

**Composting** is another way of recycling. Instead of burning or bagging leaves, grass and tree branches, chop

them up into small pieces and use the compost to cover flower beds and gardens.

Compost helps gardens to grow and saves water.

Recycling is important because it helps to keep the community clean and beautiful. Do you recycle at your house?

## Homeless Shelter



Some people do not have a place to live. They are called “homeless” because they do not have a home. There are many reasons why a person or family may not have a home. Some people do not have a family to live with or money to buy or rent a place to live. Durham County helps to provide a place for the

homeless to sleep and eat. It is called the Homeless Shelter. Sometimes churches and other groups cook food for the homeless and take it to the shelter for them to eat. The county hopes to end homelessness through a plan called, The 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

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## Inspector

An inspector is a county worker that makes sure houses, buildings, and restaurants are safe for people to live, work and eat in. The **building inspector** checks things like walls, ceilings, and stairways to

make sure they are built correctly. The **health inspector** checks restaurants to make sure they are clean and sanitary. A person can get sick if the food is not stored, cleaned, and cooked properly. The

next time you go to a restaurant, look for a sign on the wall that will let you know the health and building inspectors have been there.

## Jail

The jail is a place where people who break the law are put for punishment. Going to jail is much worse than being punished by your parent or guardian. When a person goes to jail, he or she

is called an **inmate**. An inmate lives in a tiny room with iron bars called a **cell**.

A cell has a bed, sink and a toilet. An inmate can stay in jail for many years

depending on the law that he or she has broken. Does a good citizen break the law? Think of something a person could do that would be an example of breaking the law.

## Kids

Some kids do not have a grown-up to take good care of them. A county worker called a Social Worker helps to find these kids a family to live with and care for them. This type of family is called a **foster family**. Sometimes the family may decide to take care of the child forever by **adopting** the child.

Did you know that all kids are very important people? Kids are important because

one day they will be grown-ups and parents. That is why



it is important for you to go to school and learn all you can, so that when you are an adult, you can help to make the world a better place to live. Durham County government loves kids! This book was written just for **important kids like you!**

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## Library

A library is a place that has lots and lots of books for citizens to read. Reading is important because it helps you to learn. The library also has movies, magazines, and fun things for kids to do. Durham County has eight libraries in all. There is a big library located downtown called the **Main Library**. The other libraries are called regional libraries and are located in neighborhoods so that citizens won't have far to go

to get books. These libraries are also called **branches**.

A person who works at the library and helps citizens find the books they want is called a **librarian**. If you want to take a book home, you must first get a **library card**. The library card will have your name on it. Each time you want to get books, you must give the library card to the librarian to check the books



out. You can't keep the books forever, though. You must bring them back to the library so that other people can read them too.

## Museum

Have you ever been to the **North Carolina Museum of Life and Science**? It is located in Durham County at

433 Murray Avenue. The Museum of Life and Science has all kinds of fun things for people to see, do and learn.

There is a Magic Wings Butterfly House, **Explore the Wild** and **Catch the Wind** displays and other displays to teach you about outer space, weather and

your body. There is also the **Ellerbe Creek Railway** on which you can take a 10-minute train ride through the Nature Park.

Museums are important because they help people learn about the world and how things work. That is why Durham County government helps to pay for the Museum of Life and Science.



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## Nurse

A nurse is a county worker who helps to keep you and your family healthy. To be healthy means that you are not sick. The county nurse works at the **Public Health Department**. When you do not feel well, you can go to the Public Health

Department and get medicine. At the Health Department, you can get a special shot called an **immunization**. An immunization stops germs from making you sick. The Health Department also has a dentist to help keep your



teeth strong. The “Tooth Ferry” dental van travels to schools with a dentist on board to provide dental treatments.

## Open Space

Playgrounds, parks and nature trails are all open space. They provide lots of room for kids and families to enjoy the outside. Durham County government works to save open space so that you

can enjoy the **trees, lakes, flowers, and fresh air**. Just imagine what it would be like if one day there were no flowers, trees, or lakes, or no parks or playgrounds for you to enjoy. Departments

like Cooperative Extension and Social Services provide clubs and summer programs to connect children with the great outdoors.

## Parents

Parents, sometimes called guardians, must care for their children by giving them love, food, clothes and a place to live. Sometimes

parents must also care for your grandparents when they grow old. Durham County has many services that help parents take care of their families. The **Welcome Baby** program teaches parents how to take care of a baby. The **Elder Care** program teaches families how to care for aging

adults. The County also offers job training programs. **Veteran Services** are available to families of citizens who served in the military. There are also programs on how to cook healthy food, grow a garden, make clothes, manage money and buy a house. The **Durham Center, Social Services** and **Cooperative Extension** all offer services for families.



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## Questions

If you have questions about Durham County services, all you have to do is call the **Public Information Office** at 560-0000. The office is open Monday through

Friday from 8:30a.m. until 5:00p.m. When you are at a computer, you can also use the internet to email your question to the county at [www.durhamcountync.gov](http://www.durhamcountync.gov).



## Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds keeps important records or “deeds.” If your parents were married in Durham County, you can find a record of their marriage at the Register of Deeds Office. All couples

who want to get married in Durham County must first get a **marriage license**. When someone buys a house, a record of who owns the house is kept at the Register of Deeds Office, too.

If you were born in Durham County, you can get a copy of your **birth certificate** from the Register of Deeds. Your birth certificate has your birth date on it and tells where you were born.

## Schools

Did you know that Durham County government helps to pay for schools and education? Every year, the local Board of Education asks for money from the Board of Commissioners to help pay for elementary, middle and high school buildings and programs. When a new school is needed, the Board of Commissioners has to approve money to build it.

Some kids have disabilities

and cannot go to school in a regular classroom. Durham County government pays for special classes for kids with disabilities so that they can go to school too.

If you go to public school in Durham County, you are one of about 34,800 students in the **Durham Public School System**. There

are 28 elementary schools, 9 middle schools and 10 high schools in Durham County. Do you attend a public school in Durham County?





## Taxes

Taxes are the money your parents and neighbors pay for services provided by the county. Taxes make up the county's budget. Remember, a budget is all the money that a county has to pay for services

for the people who live there.

Just as your parents pay for a ticket to see a movie, for gas to put in the car, and for clothes to wear, they must also pay taxes for county services.

## Unity

Unity means that everybody is working together to do something good. Unity is when everybody is **sharing, caring and cooperating** with each other. It is

important for citizens, the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager, schools, teachers, students, neighbors, churches and businesses to have unity in

order to make Durham County a great place to live. Can you think of an example of unity?

## Voting

Voting is how the citizens decide who will be on the Board of Commissioners. Voting is also one way citizens let the Board of Commissioners know what services they want. In order to vote, you must be 18 years old and a citizen of the county. You must first sign up to vote.

When it is time for an election, you will go to a place called a **poll**. A poll can be a school, a church, or a library. Have you even been with your parent or guardian

when they went to a poll to vote? In Durham County, when you arrive at the poll to vote you will get a piece of paper with the names of the candidates on it. This piece of paper is called a **ballot**. You must use a special pencil to mark the names of the candidates you want to win.

When you finish marking the names, you put the ballot in a voting machine so that your vote can be counted. That's all you have to do!

**Isn't voting easy?**

Kids Voting Durham, a program of Durham Cooperative Extension, gives young people a chance to vote as well. On Election Day, kids vote on the same issues and candidates as adults. Kids can vote online too!



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## Water and Sewer

Did you ever wonder how water gets to your home for you to drink and bathe? Most of the water Durham County citizens use comes from **Lake Michie** and **Little River**. Before the water comes to your home, it is made clean at a water treatment plant. Small pipes under the ground bring clean water to your home from the water treatment plant.

So where does the water go after it goes down the drain

and the toilet? If you go outside and look on your street, you will see a big, metal circle. This circle covers a big hole that leads to "big underground pipes" or sewers that carry dirty water away from your house. Dirty water is called sewage. Durham County government operates a wastewater treatment plant that cleans and recycles water to be used again.

Water is a valuable resource to our environment, which



means that it is important to protect and conserve it. A good citizen is an environmental steward who practices water conservation to ensure that there is water around to share with others.

## X-Ray

An X-Ray is a picture of your insides. **Doctors** use X-Rays to help you get well when you are sick. If a person were to fall and break an arm or leg, the doctor can use an X-Ray to find exactly where the bone is broken. A dentist can use X-Rays to get a good look at how your teeth are growing in your mouth.

X-Rays do not hurt. Getting an X-Ray is as simple as posing for a picture except the camera is much bigger.

Can you think of the county department where you can an X-Ray should you need

one? That's right, the **Public Health Department!**



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## Youth Home

The Youth Home is a place where kids who break the law are sent. Kids who get into a lot of trouble at home and school are sent to the Youth Home to live for a while. At the Youth Home, kids learn that it is important to be **good citizens** by obeying their parents and the law.



## Zoning

A zone is a “**special area**” where only certain kinds of buildings or houses can be built. To help you understand, think about football. In order to get a touchdown, a player must get the ball in the end zone, right? Well, if a citizen

wants to build a house or a building, he or she must first make sure the land is in the right zone.

Some streets in the county are zoned for houses only. Other areas are zoned for businesses only. Zoning is

important because it helps to keep order in the community. If there were no zoning rules, someone could put a skunk farm right next door to your house! **The Planning Department** oversees zoning.

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# How Much Do You Remember?

*Answer the questions below using the information you remember from reading this book. Afterwards, ask the same questions to an adult you know and find out how much they know about Durham County Government.*

1. How many students are in the Durham Public School System?
2. When voting, you will get a \_\_\_\_\_ with the names of the candidates on it.
3. What is the budget for Durham County?
4. What telephone number do you call if you or your family is in danger?
5. Where can you go to read books and magazines and do other fun things?
6. How many citizens live in Durham County?
7. You can adopt a pet from the Animal \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. Who is the special friend of the Fire Marshal?
9. How many commissioners are on the Durham County Board of Commissioners?
10. We can \_\_\_\_\_ some of our garbage to help keep our community clean and beautiful.

## Answers

1. 34,800 2. ballot 3. over \$600,000,000. 4. 9-1-1 5. library  
6. 261,000 7. Shelter 8. Sparky 9. five 10. recycle



# Good Citizenship!

N C Z D I N R E C R E A T I O N H N T I  
 Z A A O E N O S L H I P T U U O S O U F  
 F E R U N A M I R F Q X M T S R K I V P  
 R I J E G I C L T M F X T P U O B T K T  
 R E D M T E N U R A U I I R B R U C H A  
 W M C I N E E G W B Z T R R S U P E E P  
 U E B S E Q V T Z Y A I W E E J T L K E  
 B R E X V Z C N W L F P N U H C E E H R  
 T G P P I M M R I T T W D U P S Y X M M  
 Z E A O S B R A B I I A L I M B T C L I  
 Y N O J L L C G Q W Q F Q B J M I R L T  
 K C N Q R I L O O S H E L T E R I O S E  
 S Y U I P J C Z M V L J A P D A G T K I  
 S Q J P V Q L Y F M E T B A L O I C D I  
 F N K O V C S N F K U R T U S C C E S L  
 X E G J O F I A H G Y N N I C T Z P S P  
 H C I F S R E N O I S S I M M O C S M U  
 E N V I R O N M E N T R D T E E W N M Z  
 H T U O Y W Z S T N Q Z K L Y N H I Z P  
 L A M I N A M T N W L R J O Y T T T U E

ANIMAL  
 COMMISSIONERS  
 COMMUNITY  
 ELECTION  
 EMERGENCY  
 ENVIRONMENT  
 GOVERNMENT

HOSPITAL  
 IMMUNIZATION  
 INSPECTOR  
 JUROR  
 LICENSE  
 PERMIT  
 POLICY  
 READ

RECREATION  
 RECYCLE  
 SHELTER  
 SHERIFF  
 VETERAN  
 YOUTH  
 ZONING

Can you find the hiding word in the puzzle?

CITIZENSHIP

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## Who Do I Call?



Veteran's Affairs	Veterans Services	560-8387
Report Stray Dogs	Animal Control	560-0630/0631
Register to Vote	Board of Elections	560-0700
Get Job Training	Social Services	560-8000
Get Immunizations	Public Health	560-7600
Learn about Recycling	General Services	560-0430
Check Out Free Videos	Main Library	560-0100
Report Child Abuse	Social Services	560-8000
Community Watch Programs	Sheriff's Department	560-0897
Get help for Drug Abuse	The Durham Center	560-7200
Get a Business License	Tax Administration	560-0300
Get a Building Permit	Inspections	560-4144
Learn about Farming, Flowers, Sewing, Shopping, Cooking, Insects, Parenting and Businesses	Cooperative Extension	560-0525
Get a Teen Work Permit	Social Services	560-8000
Learn about Meetings for Board of Commissioners	Clerk to the Board	560-0025
Who should I call when I don't know which agency to call?	Public Information	560-0000
Medical Emergency	Durham County EMS	911
Who should I call to get a copy of my birth certificate?	Register of Deeds	560-0480