

Celebrate...

E a r t h D a y

On April 22, 1970, 20 million people across America celebrated the first Earth Day. It was a time when cities were buried under their own smog and polluted rivers caught fire.

Now Earth Day is celebrated annually around the globe. Through the combined efforts of the U.S. government, grassroots organizations, and citizens like you, what started as a day of national environmental recognition has evolved into a world-wide campaign to protect our global environment.

It's true, a child or a family **can** make a difference! Little things -- like using a cloth bag, or tossing veggie peels and eggshells into the compost pile -- can help the environment.

Here are some ways you can **go green** during [Earth Day](#).

Reduce electricity

Teach your children that lights, computers, televisions and furnaces use energy, and that energy is in short supply. Encourage them to always flip off the light when they leave a room and shut off the TV when no one is watching.

Appliances like DVD players use energy even when off, so cutting the power totally is the only way to conserve. Go shopping together to buy power strips and plug your electronics into them (watch little ones closely so there are no shocks).

Take small steps

There are dozens of small things kids and adults can do every day to save energy and keep the world cleaner and greener. Everyone can:

- Shut off the water when they brush their teeth
- Walk, ride a bike or take the bus instead of traveling by car
- Take faster showers or baths in just a small amount of water
- Help hang clothes on the line instead of putting them in the dryer
- Choose products that are not over packaged
- Buy-Recycled Content items at the store.
You'd be surprised at how many things contain recycled material these days. Use your consumer power to encourage manufacturers to make even more recycled-content products.



Recycle

Explain to your kids that every bottle and can they use is waste that just sits in a big pile at the local dump if we don't recycle. Get them involved by making it their job to sort recyclables and take them out for pickup. (Remind them to watch out for broken glass and ask for help if this happens.) If there's no recycling collection in your area, find out where you can drop off items.

Compost

It's easy to collect your own food scraps and garden waste and turn it into healthy compost in your own yard. Children can help buy a composter (they're sold at home improvement stores and can be ordered online), fill it with kitchen scraps and garden waste on a daily basis and even help stir it to get things breaking down. And, in a few months when you've got compost, they can take part in spreading it over the garden and seeing how "garbage" can become rich dark dirt to make a garden grow.

Do a donation tour

A great way to get across the message of "reuse" and "recycle" is to take kids on a trip to your local thrift store, recycling center, or church. If your children have old clothing, toys, shoes, or other items in reusable condition, make a family trip down to the donation center so they can see how their trash is someone else's treasure. Teach kids how items can be reused for different purposes--for example old towels, blankets, and comforters can often be donated to local animal shelters for bedding. These real-life examples will teach kids that many items they would normally throw away can actually have a second life.

No matter how little, you can teach kids to be pro-active about initiating eco-friendly practices in their homes and communities. Below are some examples of how kids can get involved:

Make a reusable bag

Make fun bags for grocery shopping. Plastic shopping bags are a big garbage problem -- it takes 1,000 years for a bag to break down! Have your kids help you choose some heavy fabric and sew it into simple rectangular bags with handles. Or, buy some canvas bags at a craft or environmentally friendly gift shop. Then use fabric pens to draw pictures on them. Take the bags out with you every time you shop.

Do a project

If your child has an independent research project coming up at school, suggest she tackle an environmental issue like pollution, garbage or energy. Check out this resource:

[Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Kids Club](#)

Enjoy the Earth

Kids have to love the world to want to protect it. So take nature walks and look at the trees, flowers and sky. When you're away on vacation, don't forget to enjoy the local natural environment, not just the tourist sites. Encourage them to take pictures, draw pictures, [read books](#) and write stories about the world and its beauty.

Want more fun activities and games for Earth Day...check out these sites:

Caring for the Earth Puzzles & Coloring Pages

http://edhelper.com/caring_for_earth.htm

Earth Day Games

<http://resources.kaboose.com/games/earthday.html>



