

CARING FOR NATURE

Dear Families and Caregivers,

Children are inherently curious about the natural world, from oceans to forests to the plants and animals that live in them. By nurturing that curiosity, we can inspire our kids to become more conscious and caring inhabitants of our planet. The current challenges of climate change, pollution, and habitat loss will have lasting effects, so it's crucial that current and future generations understand and value the importance of environmentalism and commit to making changes in how we and they live.

Sparking Conversations

Start a conversation about what kids enjoy about nature. Do they find a walk through the park relaxing? Do they feel a connection to the plants and animals around them? Describe some changes you've seen in the environment since you were younger. How do you feel about what you've seen? How does it make kids feel to hear about the environmental impact your generation has made? Talk to kids about an ecological footprint. This is the cumulative impact a person makes on natural resources. Take the quiz from the Global Footprint Network at footprintcalculator.org/home/en to calculate your environmental impact. Discuss the results.

Get Active

Reflect on where your family makes the largest environmental impact. Have each family member research ways to reduce your impact in that area. For example, if your home isn't very energy-efficient, you could use more-efficient lightbulbs, or seal air leaks around windows or doors. Or if a lot of energy goes into producing the food you eat, you could go meat-free one day a week. Bring the family together to discuss what each person found. Vote on one change your family will commit to making, and come up with a plan to ensure you stick to the commitment.

Eventually, you can increase your positive impact by encouraging other family members or neighbors to make a change. Share with them the commitments you have made and why they are important. If you can, supply them with the resources they'll need to make a change. If not, you can offer to be accountability partners and can set up regular check-ins to see how they're doing with their commitment.

Groups That Help Kids Make a Difference

Kids for a Better World, k4bworld.com

- This digital platform was created by Sagarika Sriram when she was 11 years old. It was designed to teach people ages 8 to 16 how to reduce their carbon footprint and help reverse climate change.

Green Kids Club, greenkidsclub.com

- Green Kids Club uses storytelling to spread the word about environmental issues relating to people and animals. A kid can also join the Wild Green Kids Club and become an official Wild Green Kid by completing tasks that help the environment. An official Wild Green Kid member can earn points and rewards by entering contests, answering animal-knowledge questions, and completing additional environment-related tasks.

Our Climate Our Future, ourclimateourfuture.org

- Our Climate Our Future educates young people about the science of climate change and empowers them to take action. After creating a free account, kids can engage with informational videos on climate science and solutions.