

'It's Easy Being Green'

(Article written by Kirstine for Little Peoples Early Learning Centre 2013)

Daydreaming about our children's future is a treasured pastime of all parents. What kind of adult will they be? What role in society will they play? What will make them happy? And will they come and visit me?! I wonder about the type of world that they'll be living in when they're adults. For me, being 'sustainable' is all about the kind of planet we are leaving for our children and grandchildren... And I'm excited!

As I read books to my children about the importance of recycling or endangered species or explain to them why we aren't going to buy the coolest Ben 10 plastic toothbrush they've ever seen, I look forward to the day when all the toothbrush options are compostable, when all the cleaning products are eco-friendly and when the concept of landfill and non-renewable energy will be in my grandchildren's storybooks – reminding them of our wayward past.

Why am I excited? Because I no longer need to daydream. Our society has all the answers and options for living sustainably from our planet and we can do it affordably and without giving up life's luxuries.

If you are interested in making your environmental footprint, and those of your children, smaller – then here are a few easy steps to get you going in the right direction.

Kirstine's Tips...

-Follow the 3Rs. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Reduce the amount of 'things' you buy. Reuse things you do buy eg. Food jars into storage containers or vases, used pallets into tables, beds, fences, compost bins. And anything you can't find a new use for, recycle it.

-When you buy, look for eco-friendly options, eg. Cleaning products, clothing, sustainable timbers, eco-paint and bamboo paintbrushes, second-hand goods.

-Compost

-Grow your own fruit and vegetables

-Energy use – try and minimise consumption as much as possible. Turn the heater down, use fans not aircon, hang out your washing to dry rather than using a dryer, turn off the lights. Opt to buy 'green power', put up solar panels or solar hot water. Or, do as my husband is doing, build your own solar heater to warm up your house for free!

-Offset some of the 'footprint' you are leaving by planting trees. Trees soak up lots of carbon dioxide – great in the battle against global warming.

-Buying for kids. Yep, kids are expensive, but let's not make them cost the earth as well. Buy biodegradable disposable nappies and wipes (normal disposables take 500-600 years to break down), buy compostable toothbrushes (I get mine from www.jackandjillkids.com). And I know it's hard, but TRY and avoid plastic!! There are many beautiful and educational toys out there made of wood or recycled materials!

There are so many ways that we can all make a positive impact on the future of this planet, and with so many people wanting the best possible future for their children, I have no doubt the future is clean and green!

Going Green Project – Planting Seeds

Materials required:

- paper towel cylinder – cut in half
- potting mix
- seeds
- gardening gloves
- teaspoon
- tray
- watering can

Method:

- cut paper towel cylinders in half
- fold the bottom of the paper towel cylinder to create a flat surface
- using the teaspoon fill the cylinder to 2/3 full with potting mix
- place seeds into the soil in the cylinder
- fill cylinder to the top with potting mix
- place cylinders on a tray in a sunny position
- water seedlings

Once the seedlings have started to grow you can plant the entire cylinder in the garden. The cardboard will eventually break down into the soil.