

GREENING YOUR HOME

“YOU, THE PARENT”

“It is the supreme art of the teacher (you, the parent) to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge” – Albert Einstein.

Parents want to do the best for their children and living a sustainable lifestyle that leaves a healthy Earth is the very best we can do for them. This can be done by teaching our children good habits and value system. By changing their outlook, we will change the outlook of the future.

Children pick up core values and habits from birth and by the time they are 10 – 11 will have internalised these, therefore it is crucial to introduce a lifestyle based on sustainability as early as possible. This is not to say that older children cannot change! Many sustainable practices strike a common cord with the essence of our intuitive humanity. Parents need to lead by example by conserving water, reusing, reducing and recycling waste, resisting consumerism, eating locally produced foods and saving energy.

By involving children you will reconnect them to the Earth, teach them to be grateful for what they have and encourage them to develop a sense of responsibility for their natural inheritance. They will realise they have the power to make a difference and create a better future and that it is “cool” to be “green”.

It is tough keeping children grounded as they are constantly bombarded with marketing messages that promote wasteful habits and values. While it is impossible to entirely avoid this, changes at home can go a long way to engendering spiritually, emotionally and physically grounded children. Our present throwaway culture has a huge impact on climate change from an energy and waste perspective.

Many of the activities will require a change in habit and these changes can be turned into exciting learning activities. Introducing an incentive scheme such as a Green Star Chart or an achievement list could be useful in keeping track of the family's diminishing environmental footprint where everyone can take pride in their progress. At various stages, rewards that are sustainable could be enjoyed collectively as a family.

Start with one action today and add others as you go to inspire your children to positively affect the world we live in.

Here are some useful websites for the whole family:

www.project90x2030.org.za , www.trees.co.za , www.rootsandshoots.org ,
www.soer.deat.gov.za , www.coolkidsforacoolclimate.org ,
www.youthxchange.net

For fun-filled activities to do with your children, go to *Chapter 23 “You the Parent”* by Andrew Yanisch in the book by Zipplies, R. 2008. *“Bending the Curve”*. Published by Africa Geographic (Pty) Ltd. Cape Town.