



## Family Learning Activity: Simple Things You Can Do to Conserve the Environment

In school, your child has been learning about conservation planning, but many of the best conservation opportunities start at home. *Simple choices you make every day can have a tremendous impact!* As a family, integrate some of these simple steps into your daily life. Then use the template to write your own Family Conservation Action Plan! *Check off the conservation steps you can take each day.*

### ❑ 1. Close the Loop: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

**Quick Tips:** Close the loop by buying recycled products and products in recycled packaging. Reduce waste by avoiding products in excess packaging, by reducing levels of consumption, and composting kitchen wastes. Don't forget to buy recycled toilet paper and paper products to save trees! See products made from recycled materials at <http://www.buygreen.com>.

### ❑ 2. Save Energy at Home: Conduct a Home Energy Audit, Get Brighter Ideas

Call your utility company for a free home-energy audit to locate the biggest energy wasters in your home and to save money! **Quick Tips:** Caulk your windows. Insulate your water heater (reduce carbon dioxide emissions up to 1,000 pounds per year).<sup>2</sup> Replace worn-out appliances with energy-efficient ones (reduce emissions by up to 3,000 pounds per year). Replace standard light bulbs with energy-efficient fluorescents, especially in rooms you use most. Replacing *just one* bulb in your home would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 500 pounds per year! (Source: EnergyStar)

### ❑ 3. Prevent Pollution Inside Your Home: Get a Green Clean Instead!

"How can I prevent pollution starting at home?" (<http://www.beesinc.org/resource/actsol02.htm>) helps you identify harmful products, dispose of them ecologically, and find greener alternatives. **Quick Tips:** Avoid products with NTA, EDTA, phosphates, chlorine bleach, or sodium hypochlorite. Buy biodegradable and non-toxic cleaning products, or make your own. See <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/education/conservationcentral/family/> for easy and economical Green Clean recipes.

### ❑ 4. Be Water Wise: Trick with a Brick, Go with the Low-Flow, The Classic Brush Off

**Quick Tips:** To save water, put a brick in your toilet tank and install low-flow showerheads (reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 300 pounds per year). Not running the water while you brush your teeth also saves water.

### ❑ 5. In Your Yard: Get Zany about Xeriscaping, Poo Poo Pesticides, Protect Pollinators

**Quick Tips:** Plant less grass and xeriscape with drought-tolerant native plants to conserve water. Avoid fertilizers and let grass go dormant in summer. Avoid pesticides—they kill pollinators and are harmful to people, animals, and the environment.

### ❑ 6. Be a Savvy Shopper: Wake Up and Smell the (Shade-Grown) Coffee!

**Quick Tips:** Buy shade-grown coffee to save tropical forest habitats and help conserve biological diversity (see [http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/Bird\\_Friendly/default.cfm?Actionvar=allroasters](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/Bird_Friendly/default.cfm?Actionvar=allroasters)) for sources in your state), buy locally-grown organic foods, and purchase certified wood products.

7. **Hoof It!**

**Quick Tips:** Cut down on carbon-dioxide emissions by walking or riding your bike, taking public transportation, and starting a carpool. If you drive, be sure your car gets 30 miles to the gallon (reduces carbon dioxide 2,500 pounds a year over a car that gets 10 mpg less). Check into competitively priced electric/gas hybrids if you are buying a new car.

8. **Take Action: Get Involved with a Local Conservation Issue.**

Contact conservation organizations to learn about the issue.

*Congratulations!* Total up the pounds of carbon-dioxide emissions you reduced and the gallons of water you saved. Can your family still make improvements? Create a family conservation action plan, sign your pledge, and post it on the refrigerator. Visit <http://www.newdream.org> to calculate the dollar amount you are saving.

We reduced carbon dioxide emissions by \_\_\_\_\_ pounds by \_\_\_\_\_.

We saved \_\_\_\_\_ gallons of water by \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Family

*Conservation Action Plan*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

We pledge to take the five action steps above to do our part in conserving the environment.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

