

ECOLOGIC

# Teach Your Children About a Greener Earth

If you want to inculcate children with sustainable habits, then you have to practice it yourself. Recycling solid wastes, using less water and power, even making choices at the grocery store send powerful messages to young ones. Set an example by following them in action



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**R**aising kids with ethical standards delivers big future payoffs. Summer vacations provide quality time for families to teach kids a thing or two about sustainability. Agreed, it is a complicated subject to crack. I still get asked if a green building is one that's painted green.

May be some folks think this is a joke, but it stopped being funny in 1999! Humans need a healthy and safe Earth to survive; and working to protect and sustain the Earth — aka sustainability — is not just for adults. Hands-on practical lessons prep children to continue being environmentally conscious for life!

The best introduction for the subject is by relating it to the Earth. Kids relate to the fact that the earth is home and needs to be cared for. Sustainability means taking care of Earth's resources like air, oceans, rivers and land; and keeping them clean and natural. By instilling love for our planet, they start to under-



Children can be taught the importance of organic farming • D Sampath Kumar

stand what they have to preserve.

Take children to naturally beautiful places like the hills, rural landscapes, lakesides and undeveloped areas. Allow them to witness nature living so they catch the spirit of preserving this beauty through

sustainability. Once motivated, children are enthused to love their environment and protect it.

If you want to teach children about sustainable living, then you have to practice it yourself. Recycling solid wastes, using less water and power,



even making choices at the grocery store send powerful messages to your children. Explaining all of this along with your actions sends them a solid message. Lessons about recycling and garbage can make a difference to the amount of refuse that reaches landfills. Even the young-

est child in a family can contribute towards this lifestyle change. Children and animals have a special bond. Encourage them to watch animal shows and teach them that the animal kingdom depends on our choices and us.

These early, basic lessons will

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help ingrain in kids a big-picture responsibility as they enjoy watching animals do their thing. It's a great way to start children out on the road to leading a sustainable life.

One task that kids of all ages enjoy is a family garden. Plant a small

patch this summer to teach them about composting, growing your own organic vegetables and herbs. Seeing food on the plate that came from seeds they planted is a big thrill for anyone, as well as a great lesson in sustainability.

Proactive kids that take sustainability seriously can teach their peers about reducing consumption, recycling and reusing items to preserve the Earth's resources and to stop harming the Earth.

Children set a positive example for adults at home when they practice sustainability! John Muir was an early American advocate of preservation, who said, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world." Children who grow up understanding and practicing sustainability within their family will powerfully impact on everyone's future.

*(The writer is an architect, urban designer, dancer and chief designer at Shilpa Architects)*