

Operation Eco-Friendly

Kids love to learn about the world around them. And once they see how excited you are about reducing use of energy, water, and waste at home, they'll want to know how they can help. If your kids are ready to go green, get them started with these playful ideas.

Go on light patrol. Encourage kids to make sure the lights are off when they're the last ones to leave a room. And the next time a bulb burns, enlist older kids to help replace it with a new, energy-efficient CFL.

Call in the aqua cops. Thwart all the extra water that gets flushed down the toilet. It's easy: Have your kids help you rinse out a used half-gallon juice jug, add a couple of inches of sand or pebbles, and fill the rest of the jug with water. Screw on the lid, flush the

toilet, and have your child place the jug in the tank. Displacing just that half-gallon of water with each flush can end up saving you more than 240 gallons of water per month.

Slow the flow. The next time they brush their teeth or wash their hands, have your kids place a bowl in the sink. They'll be amazed at how much water they use in a short period. The solution? Suggest that they stick with a pencil-thin flow of water for hand-washing and encourage them to turn off the water while brushing their teeth.

Play in the rain. The next time it starts raining, grab buckets and bowls and race outside to place them in the yard. Once the ground dries out after the rain, all that water the kids collect is perfect for giving thirsty plants a drink.