



Honey, I greened the kids!

Teaching kids earth-friendly living is as important as good manners.

Eco-experts share four easy ways to ensure your children get the message early

1 | RECYCLING

When you teach your children to make the connection between nature and the things they use every day, you help them understand the importance of protecting the environment—their home. When a child feels useful and does responsible things that have meaning, it brightens his day and boosts self-esteem. And now that recycling is mandatory in many communities, why not make it a fun activity for your kids? Set up a recycling center in your home with a couple of bins for sorting materials.

“The recycling center provides a perfect opportunity to teach kids about saving and budgeting money.”

Then name one of your children the Recycling Captain each week. He or she can decorate and label each bin and make sure your family’s separating items properly and rinsing out bottles and cans. Or you can keep score of the recyclables your child adds to the bins (like baskets in a basketball game).

Recycling can even help kids learn about earning and saving money or rewards. Every time a child disposes of his garbage in the correct recycling bin, affix a sticker to a sticker chart. When a designated number of stickers are collected, offer a reward, such as a small toy or favorite treat.

Or get your children to help collect bottles and cans, then return them to a recycling center, giving you the perfect opportunity to teach about saving and budgeting money. And the more cans they collect, the more money they will receive—now, that’s a green incentive!

—Beth Aldrich



Green-living expert **Beth Aldrich** is publisher of the online magazine for women, forherinformation.com, and radio host for the series *A Balanced Life*. She’s also a mother of three.



LISA FRANCHOT

2 | NEW TRADITIONS

The spring holidays are a great time to reconnect with your family—and reassess your environmental impact. Regardless of your religion, colored eggs are always front and center this time of year. We may not want to spend extra for organic eggs that are destined to be dyed, but don't forget that buying conventionally raised eggs supports farms that may feed their chickens pesticides, insecticides, or genetically engineered food and sewage—all of which ends up in the ecosystem, regardless.

Eggs at our house are certified

“Create colors by boiling 4 cups of chopped fruit or vegetables in 4 cups of water and 2 tablespoons of white vinegar.”



See what Mother Nature can do?



organic, grass-fed, and free-range, meaning the chickens they come from can walk and peck instead of being confined to a tiny cage.

We celebrate both Easter and Passover, and my kids love making natural egg dyes. We create colors by boiling 4 cups of chopped fruit or vegetables (berries, beets, spinach, yellow onion skins, etc.) in a pot with 4 cups of water and 2 tablespoons white vinegar for at least 15 minutes. It's not as simple as dissolving tablets of artificial colors (recently linked to hyperactivity in children), but the dyes we create make the whole process far more exciting.

Once you've enjoyed dyeing and hunting for the eggs, turn them into a yummy snack!

—Rachel Lincoln Sarnoff

3 | BETTER BATH

Moisturizing, massage, and bubble baths are perfect opportunities to bond with your baby, but it's crucial to use safe products. Skin is the largest organ of the body with an important role in the immune system. But your baby's skin has unique needs—it's five times thinner than yours and doesn't produce enough natural oils, making it highly permeable and very susceptible to environmental damage from toxins. Choosing bath products with natural ingredients is crucial for the health of your baby. —Kim Walls



Everyday kitchen utensils make great bath toys!

Read labels! And avoid these ingredients

- **Fragrance** can be an unknown combo of 4,000 chemicals
- **Harsh detergents** sodium lauryl and sodium laureth sulfates (SLS and SLES)
- **Parabens** have been linked to disruptions in reproductive systems
- **Talc** has particles that can be irritating to baby's tiny lungs if inhaled.



Kim Walls, M.S., is the mother of two, CEO of Episencial, and creator of the Epicuren Baby and Episencial (episencial.com) skin-care products.



Easy deviled eggs

- 1 Peel and then halve eggs.
- 2 Throw the yolks in a bowl.
- 3 Grab your potato masher and mash away.
- 4 Add cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper to taste.
- 5 Stir in low-fat, organic plain yogurt.
- 6 Mix and continue to season to taste.
- 7 Fill the egg whites with the yolk mixture and enjoy your delicious treat!



Rachel Lincoln Sarnoff is the mother of three and founder of EcoStiletto (ecostiletto.com), an online magazine dedicated to eco-friendly fashion and beauty. She also writes a blog, Mommy Greenest, about eco-friendly parenting.



Here's the rub

Infant massage moisturizes baby's skin with the added bonding benefit. And studies show that massage benefits cognitive *and* physical development. Experts agree that choosing a safe, all-natural lotion with the right amount of "glide" is the best option. For tips and techniques, go to infantmassageusa.org.

4 | RE-THINK TOYS

Unplugged on a Rug—the NYC company founded by Natalie Cronin Reyes and Ofrit Shiran Peres—wants to change the world with their Great Green Playdates.



The idea was born during a play date where most of the "toys" in use were not toys at all, but repurposed and recycled materials. "Children have the most complex and

creative play with the simplest things," Reyes says. "Water bottles, boxes, and containers inspire imagination, tinkering, and discussion."

Make your own recycled instruments

- **Wave drum boxes** Put a handful of beads into a cereal box, use strong tape to secure them inside. Rock the box to hear the waves.
- **Cardboard boxes** Bang the box like a great big drum! Cut holes in the side for peeking, dropping balls in, or pulling a scarf through.
- **Fill-and-spill toy** Save baby food jar lids and yogurt containers, then shake it up! 🎵

Clean recycled toys well and be sure to supervise your child at all times.



Natalie Cronin Reyes is the National Child Development Director for Kidville and has taught play for more than 10 years. **Ofrit Shiran Peres** is a musician, program author, and music educator. They are both moms to tots.