



Environmental Actions for Kids

What can teachers and students really do to make positive environmental change? Lots - what can't they do?! It's easy to take environmental action and meet curriculum requirements; just be sure to consider age-appropriateness in your choice of eco-actions for students. Here are a few suggestions:

Literacy

- Create stories or poetry that celebrates the environmental treasures of the local community. Submit to a local newspaper for publication, or have a reading in a local park or community event.
- Write letters to local and national politicians to voice students' ideas about an environmental issue.
- Maintain a class blog tracking the positive environmental actions of students in the school. Share it with other classes and parents. Invite another school to join and link to their blog.
- Create postcards about the effects of idling engines, and distribute to parents waiting in their cars for their children after school.
- Design an environmental report card for the school. Brainstorm a list of criteria (look to the Ecoschools program for ideas on what to include) and actions that need to be taken to improve. Publish the report card on the school website or office wall.

Science

- Track the path of water (and the effects of chemical cleaners) through the school's pipes into the local sewer system.
- Test the school's water supply for traces of lead and other chemicals. Meet with the school principal to share the results and request water fountains that filter the water if needed.
- Plant a demonstration garden in the schoolyard that uses only native plants that require little extra watering (besides the rain). Create a field guide about the local plants. Take other classes, teachers and parents on tours of it to share its unique features.
- Make your own soil. Set up a class vermi-composter in your class; track/weigh what the worms eat, and what type/how much compost is made. Invite other classes to meet the worms; share with them the benefits of composting. Sell the compost as a class fundraiser.

Math

- Calculate the amount of electricity being used in your classroom, and others in the school; graph the results to compare who uses the most. Issue an energy conservation challenge to other classes to see which group can reduce their energy use the most.
- Randomly sample the recycle bins of the school, looking for disposable water bottles or pop cans. Calculate the number of bottles/cans typically used by students each week; design a campaign to reduce this number by half.
- Weigh the amount of garbage created at each lunch hour at school by food waste and disposables; calculate the average amount of garbage created each day; each week; each year. Start a campaign to reduce the amount of garbage created; calculate how much money would be saved by the school on waste disposal if it was reduced by a quarter or half.

The Arts

- Write/perform songs or dance routines at an assembly or community event about a local environmental issue.
- Do a litter pickup in the school, and use the (non-toxic) litter as the basis for collages or anti-littering posters.
- Create a giant map of the school yard on kraft paper, highlighting its treasure and trouble spots. Design a guided walk of it in brochure form; share with other classes and parents.
- Create artworks using only natural materials, like leaves, sticks, stones, snow or feathers. Go on a walking tour to collect materials; set up the artworks outside for others to view.
- Research an environmental issue facing the local community. Create a class video full of skits, songs or interviews to share what was found, and encourage others to help solve it.
- Plant a tree together in the school garden or local park. Track its growth from year to year; create drawings, poems, plays, journals or short videos about its development. Share these work in an assembly or exhibit.
- Design a knit-bombing project to draw attention to a special part of your schoolyard. Have students create squares or rectangles of knitting; attach together to make a covering for a favourite bench, tree, sign or fence.

For More Ideas:

LSF: EcoLeague <http://r4r.ca/en/ecoleague>

Ecokids <http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/index.cfm>

Kids Ecology Corps <http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/how-you-can-help>

Zoom Into Action: How You Can Help <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/action/way04.html>