

Computers & Kids

COMPUTER EXPLORERS

NEWS

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RESOLVE to Be Green in 2009!

If you ask your preschooler what the “three Rs” are, he/she’s more likely to tell you about reducing, reusing, and recycling than reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic. Eco-consciousness is a concept engrained in our children. We parents have to teach ourselves new ways to be eco-conscious. How can your family make a difference by going “green” in 2009?

Happy Meals are Sad for Earth! Despite their obvious convenience, on-the-go meals produce a huge amount of paper and plastic waste. The toys that children receive are actually designed to be attractive to children for short amounts of time, prompting them to ask to go back for more. Millions of toys from fast food restaurants now live in landfills. Why not make a family pledge to cut back on fast food in 2009 and agree to use the money you save at a fun family outing instead? For more tips and tools to save the earth, visit the Eco-Active Family site at <http://eco-activefamily.com>.

Recycled Artwork is Rad! If your little one loves arts and crafts projects, take another look at everything you throw away at home. Egg cartons, coffee or soup cans, and grocery bags can all become works of art with a few inspired ideas from KinderArt. Visit www.kinderart.com/recycle/ for specific ideas on reusing materials found at home in your child’s next art project.

Consigning is Cool! Buying clothes at second-hand shops is a great way to save money and save the planet by consuming less! If you find a good consignment shop you will be surprised at the high-end gear available. If your child paints on, soils, or tears their clothes, you can find comfort in knowing how little you paid. If you have a specific brand name in mind, another “second hand” shop is Ebay (www.ebay.com) where you can find great deals on gently worn clothes for children.



Older children and their parents should not miss the Story of Stuff website. Annie Leonard takes viewers through an animated, entertaining explanation of where stuff comes from, where stuff goes, and how to stop the process! Visit www.storyofstuff.com as a family and think of ways to take yourselves out of the dreadful scenario shown!

Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,
In a recent study, the MacArthur Foundation recently verified what a lot of us already take for granted -- older children are learning future life lessons from the hours spent texting, making YouTube videos or updating their FaceBook pages (<http://digitallearning.macfound.org>). If you don't believe me, have a look at some of their work in Graffiti, Facebook's free drawing application. See: www.facebook.com/pages/Graffiti-Contest-Future-Technology/30848989375. Hint: use the replay option to see how the pictures were created. Or have a look at the growing number of amazing writing samples found at sites like FanFiction (<http://fanfiction.net>) or Quizilla (www.quizilla.com/stories/top); all loaded with quality work that was accomplished informally, after school hours.

For this month's LittleClickers topic, we looked no further than our trash can, where we found some fun and interesting sites that can help children better understand what happens to that battery or soda can when they're finished with it. For example, we were amazed to learn that over 2,500 tons of old Christmas trees will be ground up in New York City alone! We hope you enjoy this edition; and have a wonderful new year.

Warren Buckleitner, PhD, Editor
Children's Technology Review