



TOP 10 GREEN PARENTING AND HOUSEHOLD TIPS

New to the world of parenting? Read on to learn some simple choices that can help make the future of our children brighter, including cloth nappies, edible bath products, recycled toys, less plastic, more natural cleaning products and reduced expense!

The large-scale challenges that our world faces today are not simple to resolve. Many headlines talk about 'the greatest environmental threat ever seen by humanity'. We are tapping into the resources of the generations to come in a way that any future historian will only be able to call utterly selfish and irresponsible. Arguably, as parents we have more responsibility than anyone else to try and do the right thing to reduce the disastrous pressure being placed on our planet's limited resources.

Now that Leonardo Di Caprio's Oscar speech has made climate change sexier once again, let's have a look at what we busy, time-poor people can do to influence the fate of our blue – but not so green – Mother Earth.

1. Cloth nappies

Every disposable nappy ever produced still lies in some landfill today. They do not decompose and

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make a substantial dent in the parents' weekly budget. Cloth nappies, on the other hand, require a greater initial financial investment, but once a supply of 20 or so is yours, they will serve you for all your children and a greener future. Their environmental impact can be further reduced by washing with cold water, air-drying and using eco-friendly laundry detergent such as wash-nuts. If cloth is not your style, try using non-chlorinated or fully biodegradable nappies for your compost.

2. Wipe with water

Simple cloth or bamboo wipes and a bowl of warm water is all you need to clean your baby's bottom without any of the potentially nasty chemicals found in baby wipes. For when you're out and about, use a little box to store the damp wipes.

3. Natural nappy rash solutions

If you are breastfeeding, look no further. Mother's magic milk is full of antibodies, anti-oxidants and anti-bacterial properties. A few drops on baby's»



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your gift. And talking about green gifts – why not give some herbs in a pot, or a natural soap and shampoo pack (such as found in Malta’s home-grown Soap Café in Sliema) to get your friends on a greener and healthier track to!

8. Toy it back to basics

Many modern toys contain polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which releases toxic fumes into the air – or into your baby’s mouth if it ends up there!

Go back to basics and encourage children to play outdoors. In any case, babies and toddlers often just want to imitate what you are doing: A saucepan and a few pots, a box full of wooden spoons or different scarves can be most fun. You can also search for wooden toys finished with non-toxic paint. Moreover, buy second-hand and thus prevent toys ending up in a landfill and causing pollution created by manufacturing and transport. Finally, why not create a communal toy swap or set up a toy library?

9. Reduce, re-use and recycle plastic containers

Plastics are usually derived from petrochemicals and degrade extremely slowly. Most release substances with estrogenic activity when heated, so definitely avoid microwave and direct sun exposure.

There are lots of alternatives to plastic items commonly used in the kitchen, including aluminium, ceramic, enamel, bamboo, stainless steel, wood or even beeswax-coated cotton food wraps. A first and easy step could be recycling your glass jars and using them for storage, as a Tupperware substitute or next time you make your own jam or chutney

10. House Cleaning

Inexpensive and widely available bicarbonate of soda and cleaning vinegar are one of the most efficient household cleaning products without the carcinogenic side-effects of many of the commercially produced cleaners. Anything will shine, from floors, over bench tops, sinks, and fridges to baths, basins and toilets.

For mirrors and windows, apply eucalyptus oil or vinegar with a wad of newspaper to prevent fogging. If the smell of vinegar doesn’t rock your boat, add a dash of lavender oil or put some orange peel in your vinegar bottle. For smelly carpets or sofas, sprinkle on bicarb soda before vacuuming to eliminate any unpleasant odours.

Last but not least, spread the word! Your family, friends and neighbours may feel just as overwhelmed as you do about going green. Now that you have a good handle on small ways to be eco-friendly, pass on these tips to others who may be interested. And if you think you are too small to make a difference, just think about the last time you shared your bedroom with a mosquito! 🦟

«bottom will do. Moreover, breast-milk can also be used for many other ailments, such as conjunctivitis, insect bites, stings, infected wounds, burns and abrasions.

If you are not breastfeeding, try organic calendula cream or kitchen corn as a baby-powder substitute. Also, reduce the amount of acid foods such as tomatoes in your baby’s diet.

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4. Edible bath products

The last thing soft and sensitive baby skin needs is the nasty petrochemicals usually found in commercial baby products. Just because hospitals use free samples does not mean that they are safe! Pure bath water is really enough for cleaning, but if you insist on a creamy feel, fill an old stocking with a small handful of organic oats, close it with a knot and throw it in the bath. It’s deliciously soothing for grown-ups too!

5. ‘Green’ your baby-food

Changing your entire grocery list to organic may seem daunting. Instead, aim to buy some things organic, like baby food and broccoli. In Malta, the Veg Box from Villa Bologna, St Vincent’s Farm in Mellieha, the Organic House in St Paul’s Bay, Casa Natura in Sliema and Good Earth in Balluta Bay offer a variety of organic products. Apart from tasting better and being healthier, it sends a message to manufacturers, farmers and the wider community that it is worthwhile producing food without nasty chemicals.

6. Grow your own food

You can grow some herbs near a window even in the smallest city space or in the tiniest outdoor area. Search the web and your local area for urban permaculture to allow you to grow more with less. Think out of the box and the rewards will save you not only cash but also pesticides and flavourless greens.

7. Party-plan the green way

Large gatherings can often lead to large amounts of waste. To make any party eco-friendly, send “evites” instead of invites and scavenge for vintage linens instead of disposable tablecloths. For gift-wrapping, consider using a nice kitchen/tea towel or a pretty scarf. As well as saving trees, it adds a special extra to