



**Raising Kids Sustainably:
Having a Fun, Healthy Life and Planet
While Saving Money
Handout for Presentation
at the MN State Fair Eco Experience
Sustainability Stage**

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1. 3 Rs and 1 C (Reduce, Reuse, Recycling and Composting) and aim for becoming Waste-Free in your house-hold, potlucks and events:

- A. Reduce** - Try not to buy. Ask if we really need something. Reduce various forms of junk that clutters the house. Share things with neighbors when possible. Use the public and school libraries.
- B. Reuse** - Try to reuse as much as possible: Reusable glass and metal water bottles (avoid plastic water bottles) and reusable containers and napkins for school lunches and reusable plates, cups, cutlery and napkins for potlucks and picnics. Have large supply of reusable shopping bags to take with us, wash and reuse plastic bags and re-use frozen food and other bags for dog poop. Buy and sell used clothes, toys, sports equipment and music instruments.
- C. Recycle** - Did you know that only about half the aluminum cans in the US are recycled? And we throw away enough cans in 3 months to rebuild the entire US commercial air fleet. You can save a lot of energy by recycling because recycled cans use 95% less energy. And they create jobs. There are many places where you can recycle textiles and clothing or have them picked up.
- D. Compost** – Have your own compost pile and/or participate in city Organics Recycling Program where you can have food waste composted, along with tree trimmings.

- 2. Rechargeable Batteries:** They can be used for everything and eliminate a great deal of unnecessary waste and mining. They perform just as well if not better than regular batteries. While rechargeable batteries cost slightly more, just two of them when properly charged can save more than \$1000 over their life, which is more than a 100-fold return on your \$6 investment.
- 3. Use refillable water bottles and avoid plastic water bottles:** Your family can save up to \$6,000 per year by making the switch and reduce the waste of billions of plastic water bottles. Did you know that only about 23% of plastic water bottles are recycled? That means that 38 billion water bottles are put into landfills annually.
- 4. Eat fewer animal products with a Meatless Monday or even become organic vegans:** Did you know that vegetarian diets cut food costs and a vegan diet can save \$1277 per person every year? Did you know that direct US health care costs attributable to meat consumption are estimated at up to \$61.4 billion/yr (1992), including hypertension, heart disease, cancer and diabetes? According to the UN, global livestock production is one of the 2 or 3 gravest environmental threats and causes 18% of climate change. Low-meat diets could cut climate change costs in half by 2050, saving \$20 trillion. There are more and more restaurants with great vegan options, from French Meadow Bakery and Café to Trio, Seed Café and J Selby's. We have a list of numerous delicious, organic vegan meals that cost \$1-2 per person.
- 5. Healthy food choices:** Aim to eat nutrient-dense whole foods and strive to avoid refined foods, sugar, corn syrup, salt, hydrogenated oil, and chemicals such as artificial colors, flavors and preservatives. Seek best prices at Coops, Whole Foods, Costco, Trader Joes and Thrive Market.
- 6. Energy:** Consider 100% renewable electricity from Xcel's Windsource Program (roughly \$6/month more) or save money and sign-up for a Community Solar Garden or have your own rooftop solar (that doesn't

have to cost anything). Do energy conservation and efficiency, including: Turning off light switches, minimizing hot water use, using ceiling fans, installing LEDs and having energy-efficient appliances (refrigerator, dryer, front-loading washer). You can go all-electric with electric heat pump furnace/AC, dryer, range and even electric vehicle, electric snow blower (Toro) and battery-powered lawnmower. You can even have a solar cooker.

- 7. Transportation:** Bike whenever possible. Consider a battery-powered bike. Consider an electric vehicle, hybrid or energy-efficient vehicle.
- 8. Water:** Don't leave water running when doing teeth, have water efficient toilets, take short showers, purify your drinking water and consider a Whole House Water Filter.
- 9. Paper products:** Use cloth napkins and towels whenever possible. Consider tree-free products and if you need paper ones, seek 100% post-consumer recycled, non-chlorine bleached paper products, from copy paper to paper towels and toilet paper. Use the back side and do double-sided copying.
- 10. Clothing:** Pass down clothing, shoes, sports equipment, toys and sports equipment. Use organic, recycled, alternative material and nontoxic clothing and underwear. Do green dry cleaning.
- 11. Household Products:** Avoid phthalates, BPA, PVC, formaldehyde, chlorine, pesticides, toxic paints, adhesives, and other chemicals. Use safe, non-toxic cleaning products free of chlorine and other chemicals: soap (Dr. Bronners), dish soap (Seventh Generation), dish washer and laundry. Use non-toxic paints and finishes. Use cookware that is cast iron, stainless steel or copper and avoid the use of aluminum.
- 12. Household furnishings:** Use organic, non-toxic (free of flame retardants), chemically-free and low or non-VOC beds, household furniture and furnishings.

- 13. Personal Care Products:** Use all-natural, non-toxic personal care products: deodorant, hair products, lipstick, and make-up. Use organic, nontoxic, high performing hair and skin products, such as Intelligent Nutrients and Bubble and Bee Organics. Use feminine care products with organic, non-chemical cotton (including dioxin) such as Seventh Generation , Natracare, Honest Company and Organic Essentials.
- 14. Lawn, Garden and Landscape:** Use native plants and perennials as much as possible because they are more drought and pest resistant. Avoid hazardous pesticides and synthetic fertilizers and consider organic lawn care and pulling weeds. Keep lawn clippings on lawn.
- 15. Health:** Avoid smoking and have radon testing. Take off shoes and wash hands when coming in house. Get good daily exercise, whether stretching, yoga, walking, biking, dancing or sports. Take time for mindfulness, meditation or prayer. Be sensitive about sound levels whether with headphones or at concerts. Try to minimize exposure to EMFs (Electro-Magnetic Fields) from electronic devices, including cell phones. Use natural sunblock sunscreen (not chemical) and mosquito repellent. See integrative doctor and holistic dentist (avoid mercury amalgams). Make sure you're getting adequate vitamins, minerals and micronutrients, especially Vitamin D, B Vitamins, Omega 3 EPA and DHA and Probiotics. Consider homeopathic remedies whenever possible because of lessened health and environmental impacts. Try to stay healthy to avoid using medications that then contaminate water systems. Dispose of medications properly (most hospital systems will take unused drugs).
- 16. Fulfilled Living:** Make time for spiritual or religious practice. Consider having a Sabbath. Bring music, singing, art and dance into your life. If you watch TV, consider positive, empowering shows from PBS. Discourage violent and inappropriate TV shows, films and video games and see reviews by Common Sense Media. Have meals together, connect with friends and family, volunteer, get involved in your neighborhood and community and donate to causes you care about.

- 17. Baby:** Try to eat organic and avoid toxics (including mercury from fish) for 18 months before conceiving, throughout pregnancy and while breast-feeding. When feeding baby, make your own organic baby food or buy organic. Used glass baby bottles with silicone nipples. Consider using cloth or compostable diapers with a diaper service, such as Do Good Diaper Service.
- 18. Companion Animals:** Have your animal spayed or neutered, have proper vaccinations and use both tick and heartworm medication. Consider having a holistic veterinarian, such as Lake Harriet Veterinary Clinic. Consider V Dog and Pet Guard Organic Vegan Dog Food. Have safe, nontoxic toys for your animals. Be aware that dogs chewing on antler bones can break their teeth.

Helpful Resources:

Online: NextDoor and Facebook Marketplace allow free, fast selling, buying and give away items.

Food: Food Co-ops have wide variety of organic, vegan, natural, local and Fair Trade products, with low prices for bulk and during sales. Whole Foods has wide variety of organic, vegan, natural and Fair Trade products, including bulk with low price store brands and Fair Trade and 10% Amazon Prime sales. Thrive Market has online low-cost organic foods and natural products. Costco has instore and online least expensive organic products. Trader Joes has many organic and vegan products at low prices.

Clothing: Once Upon a Child – Sell and buy used (as well as some new) children’s clothing, toys, etc.. Goodwill – Resells or recycles used household goods and textiles. Patagonia – The long-time leader in high performance organic and recycled clothing with repair and recycling with encouragement to not buy. Prana – Organic and high performance. Hannah Anderson – Some organic and some Oeko-Tek certified nontoxic kids and womens clothing. Athleta – More and more organic and recycled women’s athletic clothing.

Health: Dr. Joel Fuhrman – Numerous books and helpful website addressing all aspects of nutrition. Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (Dr. Neal Barnard) – Excellent, reliable information source. Dr. Joseph Mercola – Daily newsletter on all aspects of health, although he’s gotten more into conspiracy theories.

Sports: Play It Again Sports – Sell and buy used (as well as new) sports equipment

Baby: Do Good Diaper Service – cloth and compostable with pick-up

Personal Care: Intelligent Nutrients – Salon and organic and natural hair care and personal care products. Bubble and Bee Organics - Truly non-toxic personal care products. Seventh Generation – Long-time leader in natural, post-consumer recycled consumer products

Toxics: Safe Shoppers Bible – Lists the safety of ingredients of wide variety of name brand products. Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine – Lists of non-toxic products.

Media: Common Sense Media – Great source with variety of invaluable ratings for all forms of media.

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