

# Protecting Our Environment

## Kids And Trees Grow With The Environmental Three R's

(NAPSA)—Every day in America, each man, woman and child generates nearly four pounds of trash. That's over one trillion pounds of solid waste or 365 trillion pounds each year. It's a staggering statistic when you consider the environmental effect that much garbage has on our fragile ecosystem.

As adults, it's easy to forget the importance of the 3 R's our world depends on—reducing, reusing and recycling—for the health and safety of future generations. It's those future generations—our children—that will bear the consequences of today's environmental mismanagement, unless an effort is made to improve upon current behaviors.

For the third year, one hotel company is stepping up to the task, helping kids to think globally and act locally by educating them on how to properly care for the environment. With help from The National Arbor Day Foundation, Doubletree Hotels is distributing an environmentally focused lesson plan that provides the framework for taking would-be waste and recycling it into artistic treasures to thousands of elementary school students in the U.S. and Canada.

The education initiative is an extension of the hotel's Teaching Kids to CARE program, a community outreach initiative that pairs hotel properties with elementary schools and youth groups to educate children about making conscious decisions about environmental care. This spring, Teaching Kids to CARE volunteers and children will create "litter critters," a reduced, reused and recycled representation of animals in the world hurt by litter, and will plant more than 10,000 seedling trees across the U.S. and Canada.

For those parents (and mentors) wanting to engage their kids



(or nieces, nephews and grand-kids) in environmentally conscious activities, here are a few tips:

**1. Recycling is Fun—Pass it On**—Recycling isn't all about aluminum cans and old newspapers. Encourage your kids to start their own recycling program in which they share old toys, books and games with their friends and classmates. One child's trash is another child's treasure and by "passing it on," kids will learn that they can reduce waste by recycling their old things so that others can reuse them.

**2. Become a Habitat Hero**—Challenge your children to gather up all their friends and classmates to help clean up a park or schoolyard (with parental supervision). Whoever collects the most trash wins the "Habitat Hero" award and prize (as decided upon by you).

**3. Plant a "Family Tree"**—Take your kids to a garden or home store and allow them to help pick out a young tree. (Make sure to check that it can survive in your climate region.) Plant the tree in a special location as a family, assigning a different task (digging, planting, watering) to each

family member. Make sure to document the activity with a photo, so kids can remember how small the tree was when they planted it.

**4. You CAN Make a Difference**—Encourage your children to save empty aluminum cans, then take a weekly trip to a nearby "Cash for Cans" drop-off location. Decide with your kids how best to use the money they've collected from their recycling efforts to better the environment. Options to consider include volunteering for tree planting projects, adopting a local stretch of highway to be beautified and maintained or donating the money to a local environmental organization.

**5. Pulp to Paper**—This fun, hands-on project shows kids how old newspapers are recycled back into fresh newspapers. Have your child tear a half page of newspaper into small, one-inch pieces. Fill buckets or bowls with one-part newspaper and two-parts water and let soak for several hours. Using a hand mixer, "pulp" the fibers in the paper until the mixture looks like mush. Take a handful of pulp and place it on a piece of felt, molding it to the size of the piece of paper you want to make, and press it firmly to squeeze out excess water. Let the paper dry for one or two days and voilà.

Remember, proper waste management not only helps save the environment, it also helps save energy, reduce pollution and protect animals around the world. A small effort from your kids today can guarantee a healthier, greener tomorrow.

To learn more about caring for the environment and making a difference in your own neighborhood, visit the Teaching Kids to CARE Web site at [www.doubletree.com/teachingkidstocare](http://www.doubletree.com/teachingkidstocare).