

Get into a Green Routine

By Lisa Carpenter

Be a little more green this month in honor of St. Paddy's Day! Green living expert and mother of three Beth Aldrich encourages Kansas City families to use the spring season to kickstart their routine to support the environment and establish everyday green habits.

"I encourage families to try little things to make a difference every day and to look for products that work for them and the environment," says Aldrich. "How you treat yourself, your family and your home all add up to how we collectively take care of our planet."

Aldrich says there are many simple ways families can be more environmentally conscious:



Create a carpool and spare the air.

Team up with neighbors to cut down on carbon emissions or consider purchasing a hybrid car. Hybrids love school pick-up lines because they can come to a complete stop when waiting in traffic, recharging the batteries every time you hit the brakes. The combination of a small gasoline engine with a battery-powered electric motor doubles the mileage of conventional cars and reduces the billions of pounds of carbon dioxide released into the air from fossil fuels each year.



Swap-out for greener staples.

Try to buy local or fair trade foods when you can, since most food has to travel more than 1,200 miles to land on your grocery store shelf. Look for plant-based household products to cut back on chemicals in your home. And, in general, buy from companies that use environmentally aware practices.



Reduce, reuse and recycle.

Kids learn this mantra from the first day of school. Cutting down on waste can save 1,600 pounds of garbage a year. Clean out the clutter by recycling old school papers and giving away outgrown clothes. When shopping for new school supplies, first take inventory and identify what can be reused so you only replace what you really need.

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Regina Little, Lawrence

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KC MOM'S PARTY TIPS

To make opening presents more fun, let the child who brought the gift sit next to the birthday child and watch! Everyone feels special! **Andrea Silver, Leawood**

Keep it simple. Even the best plans tend to go awry sometimes! And your child will be more excited for a party that goes smoothly than one with too many bells and whistles. **Leslie Albender, Belton**

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