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Reading Green: Earth Friendly Kids Books

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Move over Kermit. It's easy to teach your kids to be green, thanks to the many children's books devoted to the subject.

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by Rebecca Klein

In the books that follow, you'll find recipes for turning trash into treasures, simple steps your family can take to make a difference, and thought provoking anecdotes about the state of the planet and our hand in its future.

***My Body My House* by Lisa Beres**

(Green Nest LLC, 2006), www.GreenNest.com

Ages: 5 and up

In this vibrantly illustrated, rhyming tale about a boy referred to as "the Body" and his home "the House," the Body starts out thankful for all that the House provides – such as warmth from its fireplace and food from its garden.

Only, eventually the Body grows selfish. "Don't care if it's safe, or made by a creep – just make it look good and deliver it CHEAP," he says of his wishes to remodel. "Impress my neighbors and my friends down the road. Is it unhealthy? I don't want to know."

Despite the Body's behavior, the House stands by the Body and teaches him some important lessons.

Author Lisa Beres is a certified Green Building professional. Her online business, www.GreenNest.com offers products to create healthy homes. A portion of the book's proceeds is going to the Children's Health Environmental Coalition (www.checnet.org).

***Recycled Crafts Box: Sock puppets, cardboard castles, bottle bugs & 37 more earth-friendly projects & activities you can create* by Laura C. Martin**

(Storey Publishing, 2003), www.storey.com

Ages: 8-12 (With some help, far younger children can also enjoy the projects)

The makings of a corrugated box castle or a milk carton cottage may be dwelling in your family's trash can or recycling pile. How about transforming that beloved ripped t-shirt or pair of jeans into a gift bag. Grab an empty laundry detergent jug, plastic tape, some rubber bands, and plastic utensils, and presto – you have a guitar.

Tucked between recipes for crafts, you'll learn about artists whose tools of the trade are recycled items, get advice on how to start a school recycling club or a can collection charity drive, and gain all kinds of environmental trivia including a history of disposable materials. Did you know paper towels were invented by accident?

This sustainable book will grow with your child's fine motor skills and maturity. Crafts range from toddler friendly sock puppets to a more difficult dancing tin can man.

***This is My Planet, The Kids' Guide to Global Warming* by Jan Thornhill**

(Maple Tree Press Inc., 2007), www.mapletreepress.com

Ages 9-13

The kid friendly pages are filled with eye-catching pictures and ear-grabbing facts in a magazine style layout.

Whether opened to a different page every night to learn a new fact or read cover to cover, this guide simplifies complex issues surrounding global warming without watering them down. Instead of leaving readers with a fear of the future, Thornhill encourages children to do their part to take care of the planet. She shares larger scale solutions such as zero-energy buildings as well as tips your family can take at home.

***Where Does the Garbage Go* by Paul Showers**

(HarperCollins, 1994), www.harpercollinschildrens.com

Ages: 5-9

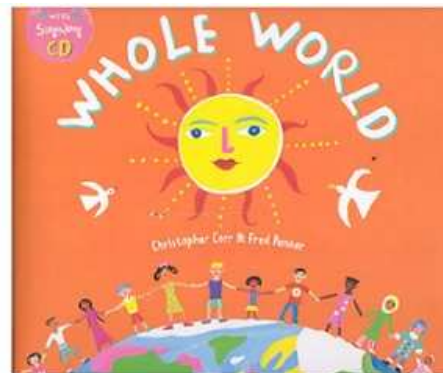
Did you know almost half of what we toss could be recycled? This brightly illustrated paperback presents an easy to understand explanation for what happens to our trash in the afterlife. Only, the message to recycle isn't the grand finale.

Just as the shirt in one clever illustration reads, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink," the author encourages young readers to make less trash and to find ways to extend the life of what we have.

***Whole World* by Christopher Corr & Fred Penner**

(Barefoot Books, 2007), www.barefootbooks.com

Ages: 0-4, if parents read it to their kids; 4-9 if kids read it alone.



This book, adapted from the song "*He's got the Whole World in His Hands*," is a great fit for hands of many sizes. Younger children can enjoy the pictures and the song on the accompanying CD and grow into the rest of the book. After reading and singing along to such words as "She's got the trees and the flowers in her hands" or "He's got the towns and the cities in his hands," you'll find blurbs about the importance of all of the "creatures and environments" mentioned in the song, learn the consequences of not taking care of our world, and find out ways we can preserve and conserve.

A percentage of the proceeds supports global conservation.

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