Tips for Teaching Sustainability to Kids

By Beth Bollas, Ohio State University Extension

- Visit a local farm or farmer’s market to teach your kids about locally grown food. If you have space, start a simple vegetable garden at home.
- Teach your kids to respect green areas; do not litter or leave pet waste. Organize or participate in a local cleanup with your kids. It’s a great way to teach children about civic responsibility.
- Instead of screen time encourage green time. Go on a bug hunt, investigate your yard with a magnifying glass or plan a nature scavenger hunt.
- Spend time enjoying nature trails, beaches, and parks to help your kids see value in protecting nature. Virtually explore places around the world to show how we are all connected.
- Use natural soaps and cleaning products. Fewer chemicals and toxins will go down the drain resulting in healthier rivers, lakes, and oceans.
- Reusing can be a great lesson in producing less waste and protecting resources. Together make something functional out of items that would normally end up in the landfill.
- Buy fun, reusable water bottles for each family member and ditch the single-use plastic bottles.
- Pack lunches in reusable containers and include a cloth napkin and utensils that can be washed.
- Research what is recyclable in your area. Create and label recycling bins with your kids and place them around your home.
- Shop at thrift stores or organize a neighborhood swap event for clothing and toys.
- Reduce food waste. As a family, preplan weekly meals and make a list before shopping. Use leftovers for lunch. Drying, canning, and freezing are all ways to make food last longer.
- Learn about composting and set up a compost bin for food scraps.
- Take shorter showers and unplug electronics (like chargers) unless they are in use.
- Put your words into action and let your kids see you making green choices.