



How to be a True Blue Green Mama

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Many women tell me that being a mother is the best job they've had and I couldn't agree more. But you know what? It's also one of the scariest jobs in the world. Just think about it. Not only are you your child's primary caregiver, but also their first role model.

Everything you say or do makes an impression on their young minds. They keenly observe your every action and every reaction and keep it locked up in their tiny brains to use at a later point.

You're their hero (at least until they hit the dreaded teens at which point your score suddenly starts to tumble) and you've to set an example for them at every stage of their life. Now if that doesn't scare you, you deserve a pat on your back. Me? I am petrified.

All of us feel strongly about certain things as moms. Some values are more important to us than others. There are some things we want to teach our children as early as possible in their life and I know for a fact that for eco moms, training their children on how to care for the environment is right on top of their priority list.

So, I have for you a list of things that you can do with your children and become a true blue green mama. Here we go:

- 1. Plant trees:** Okay, I am not talking about starting a neighborhood tree plantation drive here. I understand that moms have their plates full on most days and may not be able to fit a community-wide initiative in their schedules that easily. Just get your children to plant trees or even shrubs in your yard. Don't have a garden? No worries. Get some seeds and planters and let them grow their own plants. Put them in charge of watering and caring for their plants. That way, they'll do something for the environment and also learn to take responsibility.
- 2. Save electricity:** Our electricity use has increased 13 times from 1950. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, we consumed nearly 3,856 Billion Kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity in 2011. Whether we like it or not, saving electricity is going to become a way of life some day. The sooner we introduce our children to this virtue, the better equipped they will be in future. Little things like switching off lights when they're leaving their room; turning off devices like TVs, video games, computers, DVD players, etc. when they are not in use; wearing layers instead of cranking up/down the thermostat when they feel cold/hot; using fans or opening windows for natural ventilation during summer will go a long way in bringing down your electricity consumption.
- 3. Conserve water:** I know how much your little ones enjoy their bubble baths and inflatable pools and I am not saying you put a blanket ban on these activities. Just limit such activities to once a week. Tell your children why it's necessary and how conserving water helps our environment. This will also make your children look forward to the activity and enjoy it that much more besides teaching them to appreciate one of

the most under-rated resources of our time ? water. Teach them to take short showers, turn off the taps when they're brushing their teeth, and report any leaks they notice to you.

4. Recycle: Make it easy and fun for your kids to recycle. Set weekly recycling goals for your kids and reward them for meeting these goals. For example, give them a goal of contributing a set number of recyclable items to the recycling bin and keep a note of it. Even if they aren't able to meet their goals, reward them for the effort they make. You can also enlist their help in collecting all the metal scrap in the house ? from aluminum and tin cans to old hangers and wires ? and take them to a recycling facility like SIMS Metal Management that buys this type of scrap. Make sure to do something fun with the kids with the cash you earn from selling the scrap, so they look forward to next such outing.

5. Donate: I've always believed in the power of giving. Teaching your children to donate is one of the most important values you can give them. Get them involved in the process by letting them pick out the toys and clothes that they no longer use and driving them to a charitable institution or the nearest donation box where they can drop off their stuff. By getting your children to donate their old things, you're helping extend their useful life as well as sensitizing your kids towards people who're less fortunate than them.

Being a mama is hard work. It's a 24/7 under-appreciated and unpaid job with no sick leaves and absolutely no vacation time. But it's a job we love from the core of our hearts, so let's do the best that we can. Let's be the green mama we always wanted to be. It'll take us one step closer to our goal!

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[4] <http://kgi.org/free-tags/mother>

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