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Five fun activities to teach your children about plastic pollution

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[Schools and gatherings are being cancelled around the world as a result of the Novel Coronavirus Covid-19 Outbreak.](#) It can be difficult to occupy your children with exciting activities for hours on end, especially when you may also be working from home. Here are some ideas of that you can do with your children at home to teach them about the plastic pollution problem.

Idea 1: make a musical instrument out of plastic rubbish.

Every year 8 million tonnes of plastic waste enters our oceans. In 2018, [Shady Rabab](#) from Egypt won the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) prestigious [Young Champion of the Earth Award](#) for spotting an opportunity to get children off the streets and stop plastic from being wasted. He started the [Garbage Conservatoire](#), touring with his band of children and their instruments made from plastic pollution showing the world that it's not waste, until its wasted.

Encourage your children to use (clean) plastic rubbish to make their own instruments. They can even put on a concert for you or for social media. [Click here to get some inspiration for the instruments you could make.](#)

Idea 2: go through your cupboards and sort its content, like utensils, etc. into the type of material they are made of.

Every day we use lots of plastic products without thinking about their impact on the planet. Go into your kitchen cupboards with your child and ask them to sort everything into the type of material (plastics, cardboard, aluminum, etc.) Ask your children to pick out the items that can be recycled and show them where on the packaging they can see if its recyclable or not. The [United Nations Environment Programme Clean Seas educational pack](#) can help to show children in greater detail what different types of plastic are out there, and ways that they can reduce their use of them.

Idea 3: have a plastic-free spa day.



Shady Rabab with a flute made from an old plastic bottle. Photo by UNEP

You might not be able to go out to a spa, but that doesn't mean you can't bring the spa to you! From baby wipes to scrubs with microplastics in (plastic pieces smaller than 5 mm), plastic is hidden in plain sight in many personal care products. [Here you can see some of the sources of plastic pollution in your bathroom](#). A great way to combat hidden plastics is to have a do-it-yourself family home spa day. You can show your children how to make great natural scrubs from coconut oil, sugar and salt, and you can also make face masks from honey and bananas. Make some home treatments, put on some calming music, and relax.

Idea 4: make a boat out of plastic waste.

Many things that seem like soon-to-be trash can be given a fun new lease of life. Using plastic that you might otherwise throw away, help your child to make a small plastic raft or boat. They can put them in the bath or sink to see if they float and even take their toys on a boat ride! If possible, you could even take them to your local pond or stream and have raft races.

A recent Clean Seas campaign took part in this activity on a larger scale. [A nine-metre long dhow made from 10 tonnes of recycled trash found on Kenya's shorelines called "Flipflop"](#) sailed from Lamu, Kenya to Zanzibar raising awareness about plastic pollution.



Natural face treatments, Photo by [Seksak Kerdanno](#), Pixabay

Idea 5: put on a fashion show of clothes made out of rubbish.

Upcycling—or “making new [furniture](#), [objects](#), etc. out of [old](#) or used things or [waste material](#)”—is one of the best fashion trends for the environment. In 2016, [American Rob Greenfield wore every piece of trash he created in a month](#), turning it into a bulky trash-suit. Why not get your child to make some stylish fashion accessories out of plastic waste? They can put on a fashion show for you with their new creations!

There are many more ways that you can teach your children about plastic pollution and its impacts. UNEP's [Clean Seas website](#) has advice for how to reduce your plastic footprint, and the impact that plastic pollution is having.



Plastic Waste, Photo by Stux, Pixabay

The UNEP's Head of Advocacy, Atif Butt says, “Now, more than ever, it is clear that we must work together if we are to solve the world's greatest challenges. By teaching and learning from future generations about environmental problems, we can make great strides to beat pollution.”

The Clean Seas Campaign

The United Nations Environment Programme launched the Clean Seas Campaign in 2017 with the goal of galvanizing a global movement to turn the tide on plastic by reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastics and phasing out intentionally added microplastics. Since then, 60 countries have pledged to do their part improve plastics management through, among other measures, reducing the prevalence of single-use plastics. [Learn more about the campaign and how you can help](#), consider joining the global partnership on marine litter and follow our social media campaign @UNEP on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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