



A K-12 SCHOOL GUIDE

Educating on Earth Day

Educating today's youth about environmental sustainability has the power to capture the attention of students, teachers, parents, the community, and beyond. Earth Day 2011's education mission is simple: encourage as many K-12 schools as possible to participate in Earth Day activities that teach the importance of civic and environmental responsibility. With your help we can expand our Educators' Network, facilitate fun and educational Earth Day lessons and activities, gauge the level of environmental awareness in K-12 schools, and share our inspiring ideas and experiences. Let's teach our youth that every act has impact!



April 22, 2011
Earth Day
Every Act Matters

www.earthday.org/education

What is Earth Day Network?

Earth Day Network grew out of the first Earth Day in 1970 and is dedicated to educating our nation and the rest of the world about the value of environmental stewardship. In addition to helping organize Earth Day events around the globe, Earth Day Network runs several year-round programs. One of the organization's most successful endeavors involves Environmental Education and Green Schools. We work with over 30,000 teachers and administrators nationwide to provide innovative tools and resources to promote civic participation and to develop a sense of environmental responsibility in the classroom. Our goal is to help green America's schools within a generation.

Earth Day Network invites you and your school to join us in celebrating this year's Earth Day. In your classroom, Earth Day is a unique learning opportunity to incorporate the importance of environmental stewardship through a specific activity or a particular lesson. Earth Day is also a time to teach students about the importance of civic responsibility in their schools, homes, and communities. Earth Day activities inspire an appreciation of our natural environment and also teach our youth to examine how their behavior can make a difference around the world.

This year, we are asking teachers and administrators around the country to tell us what they are doing for Earth Day 2011 to help us gauge the environmental awareness of our youth. Your school can tell us what you are doing by taking a few seconds to add your school's events to our Earth Day Action Map at <http://act.earthday.org/K12Schools>. Upon completion, your school's events will be added to our Earth Day Action Map. The map will plot your school's efforts alongside those of thousands of other schools that have chosen to support our environment in celebration of Earth Day 2011.

With the support of administrators, teachers, students, and parents we can mobilize thousands of K-12 schools this Earth Day and educate our youth about the importance of environmental stewardship.



How can you help your school participate?



District Officials

You can set the bar for including environmental education in your school district for Earth Day and the rest of the year. By facilitating and sharing information about Earth Day with the schools in your district, you can insure your students are actively learning about environmental stewardship. Here are some ideas about how to get your district involved:

- Encourage teachers and parents to organize fun Earth Day activities and use environmental lesson plans in the classroom
- Send teachers the Earth Day Action Form so your district will be well represented on the national Earth Day Action Map!
- Invite teachers, professors, or environmental specialists to educate your schools about critical environmental issues in your community
- Track how many teachers and students are participating in Earth Day activities and report the total in a press release (we can help)
- Advertise the importance of Earth Day participation on your district's website and in the district newsletter



Teachers

You can incorporate environmental education into your lesson plans and organize fun Earth Day activities to help your students become more aware of their surroundings and their interactions with the environment. Here are some ways for you to get your students involved in Earth Day:

- Use a lesson plan from Earth Day Network's collection of 300 environmentally themed lesson plans at www.earthday.org/education
- Switch out light bulbs for energy-efficient, money-saving CFLs with your students
- Start a school garden and motivate your students to maintain it during the year
- Ask students to write an Earth Day article for your school or local newspaper
- Ask students to draw a picture depicting their favorite parts of our natural environment
- Encourage students to beautify the school yard and walking paths.
- Encourage students to paint fun, colorful eco-murals and to use non-toxic art supplies
- Join our Educator's Network to receive updates about grants, new lesson plans, and successful school greening efforts
- Teach students about local flora and fauna, and how it contributes to the community eco-system
- Join thousands of other educators across the country by adding your school's events to the Earth Day Action Map at <http://act.earthday.org/K12Schools>



Students

You can ask your teachers about an environmental issue that you are curious about. You can also talk to your peers about the environment and ask them to help you make your school and local community green. Here are some specific things you can do:

- Ask your teachers what your school will be doing for Earth Day and suggest fun activities that help to green your school or educate your classmates about an environmental issue
- Work with your Student Council to organize an Earth Day event or competition
- Start a club or plan a volunteer event that encourages environmental awareness in your school and your community
- Pick up trash at your school or in the community and dispose of it properly
- Green your school! Check out <http://www.earthday.org/greenyourschool> for more ideas!



Parents

You can ensure that your school's administrators and teachers incorporate environmental stewardship in your child's education. Encourage the school or community to organize Earth Day activities and events that will positively impact your child. Here are a few easy steps you can take to bring Earth Day into your school or community:

- Ask your child's teachers what they are planning for Earth Day
- Work with your PTA to coordinate a particular event with teachers and students
- Offer to be available on Earth Day to facilitate a particular event or activity at school
- Write your superintendent or school president and ask them to do something in honor of Earth Day
- Engage small businesses and organizations in your community to organize Earth Day activities for kids
- Work with students to plant trees or flowers in your school and coordinate with local hardware stores, landscaping companies, and gardening stores to request supply and service donations
- Check out Earth Day Education for Parents at <http://www.earthday.org/education/parents> for more ideas about how you can engage your children and your community on Earth Day

If you have any further questions about how you and your school can celebrate Earth Day or if you'd like to find more ways to incorporate environmental education into your school, please email us at education@earthday.org.
Join the Green Schools movement today!