

How to Talk to Your Kids About Climate Change



Tips for Parents

Kids are like sponges, absorbing the information, anxieties, and behaviours around them. From what they see on television, to what they learn in school or hear adults talking about, you can guarantee that your kids are taking everything in. And climate change is no exception.

For kids, this can be a daunting and confusing topic to navigate. They might be full of questions, desperate to act or feeling anxious about their future.

As a parent, you can support your child's understanding and help them feel less powerless. But where to start? We've broken climate change down into three, family-friendly steps...

Start with the problems

Begin by helping your kids digest the science. Rest assured, you don't need a science degree! It can be explained simply, in terms that kids (and grown-ups, for that matter) can understand...

Start by explaining the Earth's atmosphere

Wrapped around the Earth, like an invisible blanket, is a layer of greenhouse gases. This is our planet's atmosphere. This 'blanket' traps heat from the sun, keeping the temperature just right for living things. Picture it like a giant, natural greenhouse encircling the Earth!

TOP TIP!

Help kids to imagine these concepts through art. Ask them to draw a picture of our planet and the sun, then annotate it together. You could show the atmosphere as a circle engulfing the Earth and use arrows to demonstrate how gases and heat are trapped within it.

Next, explain the problem

Over the last 150 years, the amount of greenhouse gas in our atmosphere has increased. We burn 'fossil fuels' to power our cars, aeroplanes, factories and homes. We clear wild spaces to make way for farms, buildings and roads, and we breed millions of gassy livestock for meat and dairy. All this activity is releasing more gases, trapping more heat and warming the planet in a process called 'global warming'.



Then lay out the consequences

As a result, Earth's climate - its long-term weather patterns - is becoming harder to predict. Winters are unusually warm, summers even hotter, and rainy seasons wetter or drier than before. Ice in the coldest parts of our planet is melting, and the level of the sea is rising. We have more extreme weather, like droughts and wildfires. Ask your kids if they've noticed this where you live, or on the news.

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Highlight the solutions

We know this information can be scary for kids, so it's important to give them hope and reassurance for a positive future. Tell them about the amazing progress being made by people who are tackling climate change...

Clean energy

Explain that energy makes our modern world go round, then ask your kids to think of things they do that use energy. Tell them that while much of our energy currently comes from burning fossil fuels, things are changing. Cleaner, greener, renewable energy options like solar, wind and wave power, as well as electric vehicles, are becoming more accessible!

Sustainability

Explain that governments, organisations and people are pledging to act sustainably – which means behaving in a way that doesn't harm the

planet. There are already brilliant plans and targets in place around the world, from reducing greenhouse gases, to wasting less and reusing more. And that includes Mattel! You can read more about our sustainability commitments at corporate.mattel.com/en-us/citizenship.



Rewilding

Many of the wild places in our world have natural tools for tackling climate change! Explain that forests, wetlands and oceans absorb and trap carbon dioxide (a major greenhouse gas), stopping it from reaching our atmosphere. Charities, scientists, and conservationists are safe-guarding and restoring wild spaces like these – which are important homes for animals, too.

Inventions

Super smart people are working hard to tackle climate change, bursting with brilliant ideas for how to make things better! Tell your kids about some of the incredible inventions people have come up with to help tackle climate change, like giant machines that suck carbon dioxide out of the air, to energy-saving street lamps that only come on when someone's nearby!



TOP TIP!

Inspire kids further by giving them role models to aspire to. Check out our *Planet Heroes* resources to find out about awesome people like Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough, who are working to make a difference in the world.

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Help them feel empowered

Channel your kids' knowledge into positive actions that help them feel they're making a difference. Schedule these activities into your family calendar...

TOP TIP!
This can be a scary topic for kids, but don't be tempted to downplay it. Being honest, while remaining sensitive to your kids' ages, helps them to feel informed, respected and builds their confidence.

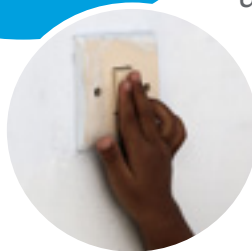
TOP TIP!

Ensure a two-way dialogue by giving your kids the opportunity to ask questions. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers – if they ask you something you don't know, ask them to write it down, giving you a chance to research it before responding.

Generally, producing plant-based foods results in lower emissions and uses fewer resources, like land, water and energy. You don't need to cut out meat completely (unless you want to) – try eating one plant-based meal a week!

Power off

Ask your kids to identify all the things they do that require energy, then work together to figure out where you could make savings. Could you all be better at switching off lights and appliances? Consider switching to a green energy supplier and explain how that's helping the planet!



Save on fuel

Transport is a huge contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Draw up some family commitments about times when you could walk, cycle or take public transport, instead of the car. Perhaps you could buddy up with family friends and organise a car share.

Eat more vegetables

Ever wished your kids would eat more greens? See if this will convince them...

Buy less & waste less

Explain to your kids that making new stuff takes energy and resources, which impacts the planet. Ask them to think carefully before buying new things and take good care of the things they already own. Better yet, buy second-hand - that way, they can give pre-loved items a new life!

Help them find their voice

Let your kids know that they can use their voice to demand change! You could help them set up a petition, accompany them to a protest, or write to their local MP asking for action on climate change. Help them decide what they want to ask for and lay out a good argument for why change is needed.

