

## **USEP-OHIO PARENT TIP: Tuning In to the Earth**

*This brief Parent Tip is provided at no cost by United Services for Effective Parenting-Ohio, Inc. as a tool to assist parents, teachers, grandparents and all who help to care for and to raise our children. For more information on this and other tools from USEP-OHIO refer to the conclusion of this Parent Tip.*

Remember Earth Day, recognized by many as a chance to think again about how connected we are to the beautiful planet we inhabit. Parents, grandparents, teachers and all of us can enjoy special talks with the children in our lives to hear their thoughts, and offer guidance about what we can do to sustain our home planet, and keep it healthy and intact for future generations.

Just as springtime is rolling in upon the land, we are seeing new signs of life we hope to always see, every spring. Ask children these questions and share some of your own:

What is your favorite thing about springtime changes in the earth?

Does it smell different outside?

Did you enjoy the winter? What made it exciting in a different way than spring?

Do you think the animals and birds enjoy all of the seasons?

What do they need to have safe places to live?

What do we do that sometimes makes it hard for them to live safely?

What can we do to help to provide safe places for them to live?

You may find that out of your conversations with the children, they think of things they can do today and for the rest of their lives to help preserve the health of our environment.

Help them choose a few that they can start right away that create change in the way they think and act.

Plan a cleanup day in your neighborhood or join in with a community cleanup day.

Make a recycling plan for your home or school, and start today to increase recycling.

Talk about ways to cut down on consumption of plastics and trash that last forever.

Discuss looking back at how differently people lived before everyone had cars and T.V.

Challenge youngsters to think about using less electricity and petroleum products.

Visit a local park, river bank or other natural area and observe how we make an impact.

Recently “tuning out” from television has been discussed as a way to increase the quality of life in the family. Tuning out also cuts down on the electricity we consume. One family I know decided to turn off the television in their home for a week. This is what they discovered.

“We had more time for everything else! We talked more. We read more. We planned our vacation together, and made a calendar for a whole year including family activities. We slept more, and went to bed earlier. We talked more quietly, probably because we didn’t have to talk over the sound of the television. At first we were cranky without the company of T.V. But, after a few days, we all seemed less stressed. Now we are playing music, taking time to scrapbook and create photo memory books, reading, writing, cooking, enjoying yard work, and even getting satisfaction out of cleaning out our house and garage. We are all planning a garage sale together. Now we choose things from the television guide in the paper and watch it as entertainment, not just to zone out.” Try it! Your family and the earth both benefit!

*We invite you to share this USEP-OHIO publication with other parents, students and professionals at home or work. You have permission to copy Tips as written, send on as email, or print for a newsletter or handout. Find more Tips at [www.usep-ohio.com](http://www.usep-ohio.com). Email [usepohio@usepohio.com](mailto:usepohio@usepohio.com) or call 1-800-262-4KIDS to add email addresses to our list, to give us feedback about how the information works for you, or for other topics, publications and programs.*

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