

GreenLiving Tips for The Natural Family



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A Word About Natural Families

Being a Natural Family doesn't mean following any guidelines, behavior or using any brand products. It has to be with the way your family decides to care of each other and for the environment, making choices that you feel comfortable individually and as a family, and living accordingly to your values.

If you consider yourself a Natural Family member who is constantly looking for healthy alternatives for your everyday living, then you're probably going to enjoy the content of this guide. All these natural alternatives are not only safe for our families and the environment, but also a good way of saving some extra money on a regular basis.

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Growing Green Kids

Nowadays there is a wide variety of consumer products and services that make day to day life convenient for busy parents. Disposable items make it easy to clean up after a meal and garbage pick-up makes it easy to throw something away and never think about it again. If we stop to think about our impact on the earth we know that we can't think this way, and we want our kids to be mindful of their impact on our planet as well. While the deck may appear to be stacked against us, it is possible to raise green kids in this consumer wonderland and it all starts with decisions we make in the home.

Recycling

One of the easiest ways to teach kids about being good stewards of their environment is to teach them about recycling and have them play an active role in the process in our own home. Kids need to know about why recycling is needed and how we can easily overwhelm our planet with garbage if we don't recycle whenever possible. Provide small tubs or cans for your kids and label accordingly: cardboard, paperboard, aluminum cans, tin cans, etc. Make it a weekly or monthly responsibility for them to sort the items to be recycled and take them out to be picked up by the city. If you do not have city pickup you can make special trips to the nearest recycling facility and as a bonus they may get to see the recycling process in action.

Also, choose to buy post consumer recycled products whenever possible. Even a toothbrush can be bought from a company that used recycled materials.

Second Hand Clothing and Toys

Buying used clothing and toys is a great way to reduce garbage, as second hand items have just been recycled by their previous owners so that someone else can use them and give them a new life. Instead of buying new clothes and toys why not save money and planetary resources by shopping for previously loved items? Freecycle is a great free program available in many cities that allows members to give away or receive recycled items. Check <http://www.freecycle.org/>

Conservation

Teach kids from an early age that conserving resources such as energy and water is important. Have them help you build a cistern or a rain water collection system so that you can capture rainfall and to use during droughts or for watering indoor plants. It can be game for them to monitor how fast the water accumulates.

Stress the importance of turning on all lights and electrical appliances when not in use. Plug TVs, DVD units, CD players, video game systems, etc into one power strip and have them turn it off after each use. Small reminder signs can be made and placed near exit ways or on remote controls to help them remember to do this.

When the weather is permitting have your children help you hang clothes outside on a clothes

line to dry. You use sun power and conserve energy in the process. Think about other ways that you can use alternative energy in your home too.

These steps can make a big impact. Of course the biggest impact might be on our children as we teach them that showing care to our planet and keeping it beautiful is important.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle as a Family

The three R's of environmentalism are reduce, reuse, and recycle. They are important for green Natural Families to know and consider in daily life as they often serve as the foundation for green goals and family ideals. All three of them should be considered whenever we take out the trash or buy new products for the home.



Reducing basically means eliminating things you don't need, or in other words: making less garbage. When making purchases it is important to determine if the products you are buying are really necessary. Many times we tend to find that we buy many luxury items along side the necessities. There is nothing wrong with treating yourself occasionally but as a rule simplicity is better. If you do decide to buy, you can still reduce your landfill contribution by electing to buy products that will last for a long time or have another use later on.

Purchasing **reusable** items that need not be thrown away is another great way to avoid landfill waste. It is environmentally reckless to use disposable products that can only be used once before being thrown away. This puts a burden on our planetary resources and creates needless waste.

Recycling is the process by which materials are collected and used as a basis for new products or materials. Recycling items that you would otherwise throw away reduces waste and helps us conserve energy and money. Buying products made from post consumer recycled materials encourages more recycling.

Here are some of the ways that Natural Families can practice the 3 R's

1. Use dishes, flatware, and glasses instead of their disposable counterparts.
2. Set out cloth napkins for family meals.
3. Use cloth diapers and cloth baby wipes.
4. Start a compost pile for kitchen scraps.
5. Ask yourself if that item you have your eye on is a necessity or a luxury.
6. Donate toys and clothes you no longer have a use for to others that can use them.
7. Instead of buying new check out second hand stores or online message boards like Craigslist and Freecycle.
8. Start an organic garden to reduce your grocery bill and time spent shopping.
9. Buy rechargeable batteries.

10. Invest in reusable shopping bags and stop using the paper and plastic ones provided by the store.
11. Join a book or clothing swap.
12. Recycle your old cell phones and eyeglasses.
13. Use paper scraps and old magazines for kids craft projects.
14. Don't purchase greeting cards and invitations from the store. Instead, make your own at home with scraps or send digital invites and greetings.
15. Use worn out clothing and make a memory quilt that will be treasured for generations to come.

Being Eco Friendly and Financially Savvy

Perhaps many families don't initially make the switch to greener living because they are concerned about the environment. It may be that many are actually seeking to live a more simplistic and frugal life because they have limited resources and a limited budget. Either way going green can really save your family some green in the long run.

So how exactly can green living equate to cost savings for your family? Here are some of the many ways:



Grow Your Own Food

To avoid pesticides and to eat locally many families have turned to growing their own food. Eating food from your own garden will go along way towards easing your budget woes. Living in an apartment? Many varieties of herbs and other plants will do great in small pots around your house!

Reusing and Avoiding to Buy New

Natural Families everywhere know that landfill waste is a serious problem so they seek to use reusable and recycled or recyclable items. This means they might use their stainless steel water bottles and filtered tap water instead of expensive bottled waters. They might also shop at yard sales and thrift stores to buy second hand items instead of buying brand new. They often like to use book swap services and clothing swap services too. These activities reduce their contributions to wasteful consumerism and they save a lot of money in the process.

Driving Less Means Money Saved

Eco minded people are rightfully concerned about the carbon emissions and other car pollutants that enter our atmosphere when we drive. Many families have opted to buy energy efficient cars that have better gas mileage. Others drive cars that run on biofuel or waste



vegetable oil. Some carpool, use mass transit, ride their bike more often or walk wherever they need to go. All of these choices result in cost savings and usually some calories burned.

Energy Saved is Money in the Bank

One of the first eco-tips you usually hear is to turn lights off when you leave a room and conserve energy. Well, they usually go beyond that. To conserve energy, environmentally minded families will turn off lights, switch out inefficient light bulbs, insulate their hot water heaters, wash their clothes in cold water, and much more. All of these practices result in energy savings which any frugal person can see also means a cost savings.

Green Cleaning Saves Money

All of those conventional cleaning products on the market can be pretty pricey but environmentalists know that you can clean your home effectively with natural and relatively cheap products like baking soda, vinegar, borax, lemons, and olive oil. It is much more cost efficient to use these ingredients and make your own cleaners than to buy the ones at the supermarket. Even soaps and detergents can be made at low cost, at home.

There are many similarities between green living and frugal living and both can be practiced together for monetary benefit and the benefit of the planet.

Green Cleaning Alternatives for the Natural Family

There are several reasons why Natural Families want to use green cleaners to tidy up their homes. Conventional cleaners might be effective in cutting through dirt and grime but they do so at the expense of our health and the environment. The widespread availability of conventional products indicates to most people that they must be relatively safe for use. But these cleaners contain many chemicals that can be toxic, reactive, corrosive, or flammable. There is also the potential that they can cause serious health issues and environmental damage. Do you really need to clean your home with ingredients like these?:

- Formaldehyde
- Hydrochloric Acid
- Petroleum

Not only do ingredients like these and the hundreds of other potentially toxic ingredients used in mainstream cleaners have the potential to cause physical harm, they can do environmental harm as well. Each day millions of pounds of household cleaning products are carelessly poured down drains. Many of these toxic substances are NOT able to be processed adequately by sewage treatment plants or septic systems and contamination of surface and ground water can occur. Fish and other wildlife might also be negatively impacted.

It is for all these reasons that Natural Families everywhere are choosing to use cleaners made with natural ingredients that do not endanger their children or the planet. Natural ingredients

can be just as effective as harsh conventional cleaners but without the negative side effects. Some of the favored natural cleaning ingredients are below.

- **Vinegar** is a natural all purpose cleaner. It also disinfects and deodorizes. It kills 99 percent of bacteria, 82 percent of mold, and 80 percent of germs and viruses. Apple cider vinegar is known as the most effective, but you can use any white vinegar available. Spray it over the kitchen counter, floors and even vegetables and fruits to disinfect. Use it instead of laundry softener and rinse shampoo with vinegar for extra shine.

- **Pure castile soap** is a basic cleaner that works wonders. Why do you need fancy cleaners when good old soap and water are already so good?



- **Lemons** can be used to make your own cleaning pastes when you add baking soda and vinegar. They dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits and they shine brass and copper. Since they smell so divine they can also be used to deodorize. For instance, grinding some lemon peels in the garbage disposal takes care of odors beautifully.

- **Vegetable oils** can be used as a furniture polish to hydrate and shine your wood furniture.

- **Baking Soda** is one of the more preferred and versatile natural cleaners. It deodorizes, it scrubs surfaces, and it can be used to make liquid pastes. Add a few drops of essential oil to baking soda and you have a scented toilet and tub scrub.

Making your own cleaning supplies with natural ingredients is easy and safe but if you don't have the time or inclination to do that there are also a growing number of green cleaners available at health food stores and online. There is just no reason why you can't clean with green power in your own home.

Make Your Own Natural Baby Products

Many conventional baby products contain questionable ingredients such as parabens, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS), talc, and synthetic perfumes and fragrances. All of these ingredients can have adverse effects on the health and well being of your baby, so it is no wonder that many parents have chosen to take matters into their own hands. Parents are now finding that it is easy, more cost effective, and safer to **make their own baby products with natural ingredients**. By stocking your pantry with a few key natural ingredients you can make all sorts of natural baby products for baby. You don't have to be a chemist to create luxurious, baby friendly products that are all natural.

The skin is the body's largest organ and it has the ability to absorb things that come into contact with it. With that in mind, most parents would agree that ensuring your baby products are completely natural is worth it. These recipes should help you get started.

Here are a few easy recipes for natural baby products that are sure to please:

All Natural Baby Wipes Solution

- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup Aloe Vera Juice
- 1 tablespoon Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Calendula Oil
- 1 teaspoon grated, unscented soap
- 2 drops Lavender Oil
- 2 drops Tea Tree Oil

Mix in a jar and then pour over organic cloth wipes or paper towels. This baby wipe solution is anti-fungal and great for discouraging yeast diaper rashes.

Homemade Baby Powder (Talc-free)

1/2 cup corn starch
1/2 cup Arrowroot powder
1 tablespoon dried ground chamomile
1 tablespoon dried ground lavender
1/4 cup finely ground oats
Blend well and put in a shaker style bottle. Now you can powder your baby's little bottom in safety.

Baby Bath Milk

1 cup milk
1/4 cup corn starch
1/4 cup finely ground oats
2-3 drops of rose, or chamomile essential oils

Mix ingredients together and put in a shaker style bottle. To use, sprinkle a small amount in warm bath water.

Baby Wash and Toddler Shampoo

Just scrub with a spoon of honey and rinse well. It also works wonderful as face wash for adults.



A Better Baby Oil

1 cup Grapeseed or Apricot Kernel oil
4-6 drops of chamomile essential oils
1-2 vitamin E capsules (optional)

Squeeze the vitamin E capsules into the oils and mix together. Store in a dark colored bottle and use as a bath or massage oil.



Lavender Dryer Sachets

1 small muslin drawstring bag (you can usually get these at craft stores)
Dried Lavender
2-3 drops lavender essential oil

Fill the muslin bag with the dried lavender and add the essential oil. Close the bag tightly and throw in the dryer along with your baby clothes. They will be super soft and they will smell great!

Making our own baby products with all natural ingredients is fun to do, it saves money, and most importantly it ensures that our babies' delicate immune systems are not unduly taxed by harmful product ingredients. Most of the ingredients listed above can be bought at conventional supermarkets and natural food stores in most cities, so you can pick some up on your regular shopping trips.

Thanks for subscribing to the NaturalFamilyWorld.com e-mail list, I hope you've found this report of interest to your family.

As you might already know, I'm an Ecuadorian single unschooling work at home mom who loves to connect with other parents around the globe. I invite you to visit the blog and leave your comments any time!

Read/understand Spanish? Please visit my Natural Parenting blog and podcast at <http://FamiliaLibre.com/blog>

Warmly,

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