

# Earth Day Activities

Earth Day is a great time to help children practice **caring for the world around them** through simple routines: noticing nature, reducing waste, reusing materials, and helping keep shared spaces clean. Use these activities at home or in group care settings to choose what fits your day and your children.

## Infants (Birth–12 months)

### 1) Nature Texture Board

**Materials:** sturdy cardboard/foam board, large fabric scraps, safe nature items (large leaves *sealed*, smooth bark pieces, felt, soft paper), wide clear tape or contact paper

**Setup:** Tape items flat to the board; cover with contact paper so nothing comes loose.

**Directions:**

1. Sit with the baby on your lap or on a mat. Place the board within reach.
2. Help the baby touch one section at a time.
3. Narrate with simple words: “Soft.” “Rough.” “Smooth.” “Leaf.”
4. Pause and follow the baby's interest (1–3 minutes is plenty).

**Tip:** Avoid small items (seeds, pebbles). Keep everything securely sealed.

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### 2) “Light and Leaves” Calm Sensory Moment

**Materials:** green scarf or tissue paper, safe flashlight or window light

**Directions:**

1. Hold the scarf/tissue near a light source and slowly move it.
2. Say: “Green... wave... gentle.”
3. Encourage the baby to reach and touch (you hold it steady).



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4. End with a cuddle and “We take gentle care.”
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### 3) Water Play in a Tray

**Materials:** shallow tray, small amount of water, 1–2 large cups, towel

**Directions:**

1. Put a small layer of water in a tray on the floor.
2. Let the baby splash while you model “gentle hands.”
3. Talk about saving water: “A little water is enough.”

**Safety:** Never leave a baby unattended. Keep water shallow.

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## Young Toddlers (1–2 years)

### 1) “Turn Off the Lights” Helper Game

**Materials:** none (optional: a simple “helper badge” sticker)

**Directions:**

1. Choose a daily routine time (leaving the room, nap prep).
2. Say: “Earth helpers save energy. Let’s turn off the light!”
3. Let a toddler flip the switch with your help.
4. Cheer: “You saved energy!”

**Tip:** Rotate the helper so everyone gets a turn.

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## 2) Simple Sorting: Trash vs. Recycle

**Materials:** two bins, picture cards (or cutouts) of common items: paper, plastic bottle, can, banana peel, cardboard box

**Directions:**

1. Label bins with pictures: “Recycle” and “Trash.”
2. Hold up one picture: “Bottle—where does it go?”
3. Help the child place it in the matching bin.
4. Repeat with 5–8 items total.

**Note:** Recycling rules vary by location—keep it general and use “recycle bin” as a concept.

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## 3) Reuse Art: Sticker Collage on Cardboard

**Materials:** clean cardboard, stickers, large paper scraps, glue stick, crayons

**Directions:**

1. Give each child a piece of cardboard as the “canvas.”
2. Offer scraps and stickers to decorate.
3. Say: “We’re reusing materials. That helps our Earth.”

**Tip:** Great for fine-motor practice without needing many supplies.

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## Older Toddlers (2–3 years)

### 1) Mini “Garden” Sensory Bin



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**Materials:** bin, potting soil (or shredded paper as a no-mess option), scoops, cups, toy insects, plastic flowers

**Directions:**

1. Add soil/paper to a bin.
2. Model scooping, pouring, “planting” flowers.
3. Add language: “dig,” “plant,” “cover,” “gentle.”
4. Clean up together: “We keep our space tidy.”

**Safety:** Watch for mouthing. Use larger toys only.

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## 2) Earth Day “Clean-Up Song” Routine

**Materials:** cleanup song (any tune), labeled bins with picture labels

**Directions:**

1. Teach one simple line: “Pick up, pick up, help our Earth!”
2. During cleanup, point to labels: “Blocks go here.”
3. Praise effort: “You helped our classroom!”

**Why it matters:** Earth Day becomes a **daily habit**, not just one day.

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## 3) Save the Animals Rescue Game

**Materials:** stuffed animals, 2 baskets labeled “safe” and “needs help,” painter’s tape

**Directions:**

1. Place stuffed animals around the room.
2. Children “rescue” them by carrying one at a time to the “safe” basket.



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3. Add movement rules: hop, tiptoe, walk slowly.
  4. Message: "We take care of living things."
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## Preschool (3–5 years)

### 1) Seed Sprout Cups

**Materials:** clear cups, paper towels or cotton balls, dried beans (lentils/beans), water spray bottle, marker

**Directions:**

1. Wet a paper towel and place it inside a clear cup.
2. Put 2–3 beans between the cup wall and towel so kids can see them.
3. Label with child's name and date.
4. Place in a sunny spot. Mist daily (or as needed).
5. Observe changes and draw what they see.

**Extensions:**

- Start a chart: "Day 1, Day 3, Day 5..."
  - Vocabulary: "sprout," "root," "stem."
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### 2) Recycled Materials Build Challenge

**Materials:** clean recyclables (small boxes, tubes, paper), tape, glue, markers

**Directions:**



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1. Tell children the challenge: “Build something useful for our classroom (a pencil holder, a marble ramp, a bird feeder model).”
2. Let them plan with a quick sketch (even scribbles).
3. Build and test.
4. Share: “We reused materials—less waste!”

**Tip:** Pre-check items for safety (no sharp edges, no food residue).

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### 3) Nature Detective

**Materials:** clipboards (optional), paper, crayons, small bag or tray, magnifier (optional)

**Directions:**

1. Walk outside and set a goal: “Find 3 natural things (leaf, rock, flower petal).”
2. Collect only what’s allowed (or do a photo/drawing “collection” if you can’t pick).
3. Back inside, sort by color/size/texture.
4. Discuss: “What did you notice? What living things did you see?”

**Teach respect:** “We look gently and leave living things safe.”

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### 4) Earth Pledge Poster

**Materials:** large paper, markers, paint (optional), handprints (optional)

**Directions:**

1. Ask: “What can we do to help our Earth?”
2. Write 3–5 child-friendly pledges, like:



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- “We turn off the lights.”
  - “We use both sides of paper.”
  - “We recycle when we can.”
  - “We take care of plants and animals.”
3. Children add drawings or handprints.
  4. Hang it where kids can see it daily.
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## School Age (6+)

### 1) Classroom Audit: “Where Do We Waste?”

**Materials:** clipboard/paper, pencil, timer (optional)

**Directions:**

1. Choose one area: paper, lights, water, snack trash, supplies.
2. Observe for one day (or one hour). Track: “How many papers were thrown away with blank space?”
3. Make a plan: 1 small change for the week (scrap paper bin, lights monitor, refillable water bottles).
4. Re-check after a week and celebrate improvement.

**Extension:** Turn it into a graph.

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### 2) Upcycle Project

**Materials:** clean jars/containers, cardboard, fabric scraps, tape/glue, scissors, markers

**Project ideas:** pencil cup, mini organizer, reusable gift bag, bird feeder model (no food if



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allergies)

**Directions:**

1. Students choose one project and list materials they'll reuse.
  2. Build and label.
  3. Share a "before/after" explanation: "This used to be \_\_\_\_; now it's \_\_\_\_."
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### 3) Community Kindness: Cleanup Walk

**Materials:** gloves, trash bags, hand sanitizer, adult supervision

**Directions:**

1. Review safety rules: don't pick up sharp items; adults handle glass/unknown objects.
2. Assign zones and partners.
3. Collect litter for 10–20 minutes.
4. Wash hands and reflect: "How did this help our community?"

**Optional:** Weigh bags (math) or count items (data).

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### 4) Eco-Inventions

**Materials:** paper, markers, optional: recycled materials for prototype

**Directions:**

1. Prompt: "Invent something that helps save energy, water, or reduces trash."
2. Students brainstorm, sketch, and label parts.
3. 30-second pitch to the group: problem → idea → how it helps.



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