

ENVIROKIDS WORKSHOPS



OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



Our Carbon Footprint - Footprints offer clues about where we came from and where we are headed. Their impressions tell us a lot of information like, were we running, walking and how big we are, the actual footprints offer all these details , **carbon footprints** measure how much carbon dioxide (CO₂) we produce just by going about our daily lives. A drive to school, turning on a light, a drive to the shops all rely on the combustion of fossil fuels like [oil](#), coal, gas and petrol. When fossil fuels burn, they emit gases like CO₂ that contribute to [global warming](#). Ninety-eight percent of these gases come from the combustion of fossil fuels. Reducing your carbon footprint, yourself first and then try at home by increasing your home's energy efficiency. Some people start by calculating their carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is simply a figure. The **carbon calculators** are easy to use and give information like electricity at home, converting the use every month or year to c02 readings and petrol in the car and calculating the same. In this **issue** we will have a look at simple ways we all can help the planet we live in.



What we need to do

This Issue we will give you some tips on how you can help reduce your Carbon footprint, we will look at how in your daily life you can do simple tasks that can have a massive effect towards reducing your carbon footprint. We live in a fabulous world as we have seen in past issues like the Amazon, the Barrier reef and the Arctic. Unfortunately, they are all under threat from Global warming from Greenhouse gases CO₂. What we all need to do is reduce our CO₂, nearly everything we do is measured in our (CF) Carbon footprint. The products we buy in the shop, the Games console being turned on, the food we eat, all influence our CF. So let's have a look at some simple way's we can help in reducing our CF.



7 Simple tips on how we can reduce our Carbon Footprint.

1, Reducing electricity at home. Appoint an energy champion in your home to keep an eye on overuse of electricity, lights on, tv on etc. Turn off lights when leaving rooms, use LED bulbs, they are 75% more efficient than standard bulbs. Turn the computer, TV and consoles off fully at night and do not leave on standby mode. This is a huge saving for any household, these devices are designed to be turned on & off so shut down fully. A good idea is an extension lead with a power switch to turn all off at once. A simple idea leaves your device unplugged unless you are using them. Heating water only when necessary and immersion on sink mode is also a good tip. When boiling the kettle, only boil what you need.

2, Drive less. Choose to walk, bike, or take the bus – leave the car at home, and you will be making an easy decision with immediate results. Many people are opting to bike, especially with bike lanes becoming more prevalent. The country is finally investing in the necessary restrictions to make it easier *not* to own a car. Cycle groups are a great and safe way to get to school, walking to school or if you are on a bus route, all of these are helping reduce your CF. In some areas carpooling is becoming popular if you are not close to your school.

3, Food Waste. Food waste is a big problem in Ireland, we are one of the worst in Europe for food waste. It is estimated the average Irish person wastes €700 worth of food every year or 187kilos. The biggest impact is to the environment, the food that is never eaten still had to be produced. From the farmers field to the shop there was a huge CF, Harvesting, Transport, Packaging, Shop and then to your home. So when you're out shopping with your family, have a look at what you're buying, and when you're having meals at home, cut down on portions so nothing gets thrown in the bin. Use leftovers like pasta and rice for lunch the next day or try using leftover recipes, check use by dates and use before out of date and always only buy what you need.

4, Home Garden. Having your own fruit and veg is such great and easy way to eat healthy and reduce your CF. From digging your own patch to sowing the seeds and then eating what you have grown cannot be more fulfilling. The simple way to start is with herbs. These can be put on a windowsill or on a shelf or you can pick 5 veg and fruits to start in your garden or balcony. If this doesn't suit, you could plant a wild garden that's friendly for the birds and bees. Lavender and thyme are great for wildlife in your garden or balcony, and berry plants are also good for attracting birds and bees.



5, **Shop local.** If growing your own fruit or veg is not your thing, you can shop local. The local farmers market is great for fresh fruit and veg. By shopping local you are supporting local farmers and cutting down on transport, saving your CF. Food that is grown locally will always be better for the environment, as well as being fresh, the product will travel a lot less. Items on the shelves in our supermarkets have travelled halfway around the world. For instance, pineapples on our shelves come from Ecuador, which is 8,884km before they reach your local store. Avoid processed food and try to buy organic food. I know it can be a lot more expensive, but maybe buy just 1 or 2 products every week. They are also better for you. Try seasonal food like apples and berries in the summer and cabbage, onions, carrots and sprouts in the winter.

6, **Refuse Reduce Reuse Recycle.** The 4 Rs is an especially important part of keeping your CF low. (Refuse) try avoiding using single use plastic, as seen in one of our previous issues, single use plastic is having such a negative impact on our planet. Cut down on melty packs, plastic bags when shopping and food that is wrapped in plastic. (Reduce) Try cut down on unnecessary buying, only buy what you need when doing your weekly shop. Electrical items see can they be repaired rather than thrown out and a new one bought. (Reuse) Trying to keep items out of the landfill is the most important thing. See can you upcycle rather than throw out, reuse yogurt cartons for planting seeds, takeaway cartons for storing food or lunches. (Recycle) Always try recycling when you can and doing it correctly is important. You can recycle almost everything from glass to electrical items, phones, tv's and microwaves, all can be recycled. To see some tips, check out mywaste.ie.



7, **Cut down on meat.** Just eating less meat can have a huge effect on reducing your CF. Red meat is a huge contributor to global warming using up 11 times more water and producing 5 times more emissions than chicken. You do not have to become a vegetarian, just cutting down on red meat would be extremely helpful to the planet. To get 1 pound of red meat it takes 5,000 gallons of water, the number one user of fresh water is the agricultural industry.



Activities to do at home

You can do some searching at home for ways, as a family, you can reduce your CF.

Download the carbon footprint calculator.

Do a small project on how you could help your school to reduce food waste.



Quiz

- 1, What are the best bulbs to save energy?
- 2, What are the 4 Rs?
- 3, How much do money do we each waste on food each year €?
- 4, What should we do with all devices at night?
- 5, Name some veg you can grow in winter?
- 6, 3 ways to get to school and save the environment?
- 7, Who do you support by shopping local?
- 8, What's a good tip when boiling a kettle?
- 9, What is a Carbon Calculator used for?
- 10, Is red meat good for the environment?

All answers will be on our next issue (The River Nile)

Quiz from last issue The Barrier Reef.

- 1, Where would you find the Great Barrier reef? Australia
- 2, Name the largest sandy island that's along the reef? Frazer island
- 3, How many species of shark can be found on the reef? 134 species of shark
- 4, How long is the Great barrier reef? 2,300km long
- 5, Can the reef be seen from space? Yes
- 6, Name the wild dog that can be found on the sandy island? Dingo
- 7, The Dugongs are better known as? Sea Cow
- 8, What type of fish was Nemo? Clown fish
- 9, Whale sharks grow to what length? 50 foot long
- 10, How many species of turtle live on the reef? 6 of the 7 species live on the reef.



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