

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



## FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE 2021



The Academy of  
Natural Sciences  
of DREXEL UNIVERSITY

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Environmental Justice is a very broad topic that can often spur questions. Many times, environmental issues affect different communities in different ways, even though the distance between these communities is not great. Beginning the conversation with your children is a good place to start.

Check out these resources to learn more about the subject of environmental justice. Use our conversation starters to start talking about these environmental issues in your own home, and check out the organizations helping to champion these causes in your community.

# BOOKS to Read

## GRADES PRE-K-2

One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia by Miranda Paul

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Plastic pollution

Where's Rodney by Carmen Bogan

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Connection with nature

I Am Farmer: Growing an Environmental Movement in Cameroon by Miranda and Baptiste Paul

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Access to clean water;  
access to fresh produce

Nibi is Water by Joanne Robertson

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Importance of water

Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner by Janice N. Harrington, Theodore Taylor III (Illustrator)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Entomologist Charles Henry Turner;  
importance of bugs

Call Me Tree / Llamame Arbol\* by Maya Christina Gonzalez

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Connection with nature

## GRADES 3-7

Buried Sunlight: How Fossil Fuels Have Changed the Earth  
by Molly Bang and Penny Chisholm

TOPIC(S) COVERED: What are fossil fuels?

Moth and Wasp, Soil and Ocean by Sigrid Schmalzer, Melanie Linden Chan (Illustrator)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Exploration of pesticide use;  
Chinese scientist Pu Zhelong

Aani & the Tree Huggers by Jeannine Atkins

TOPIC(S) COVERED: An analysis of development;  
importance of trees

Rachel Carson and her book that changed the world  
by Laurie Lawlor Laura Beingessner (Illustrator)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: An analysis of pesticide use;  
American Scientist Rachel Carson

The Story of the Blue Planet by Andri Snaer Magnason,  
Aslaug Jonsdottir (Illustrator)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Being part of a society;  
caring for your fellow humans

Stella Diaz Never Gives Up by Angela Dominguez

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Environmental activism; water pollution

Forest World by Margarita Engle

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Forest Conservation

Heroes of the Environment: True Stories of People Who Are Helping to Protect Our Planet  
by Harriet Rohmer, Julie McLaughlin (Illustrator)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Environmental activism; conservation

## **GRADES 8-12**

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Dangers of pesticide use;  
environmental activism

Living Downstream by Sandra Steingraber

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Exploration of pollution;  
environmental activism

Coal Mountain Elementary by Mark Nowak, Ian Teh (Photographer)

TOPIC(S) COVERED: An analysis of coal mining

Cowed: The Hidden Impact of 93 Million Cows on America's Health, Economy, Politics, Culture, and Environment by Denis Hayes, Gail Boyer Hayes

TOPIC(S) COVERED: pollution and the cattle industry;  
environmental activism

No Planet B Edited by Lucy Diavolo

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Environmental activism; pollution

On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal by Naomi Klein

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Environmental activism; climate change

Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace by Vandana Shiva

TOPIC(S) COVERED: Environmental activism;  
extinction

# CONVERSATIONS to Have

## HOW DO YOU BEGIN TALKING TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT TOUGH TOPICS?

RESOURCES:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-difficult-subjects>

<https://thrive.psu.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-tough-topics/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/01/14/things-keep-mind-when-talking-kids-about-tough-subjects/>

## What is environmental justice? Why is it important?

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and involvement of all people in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/topics/environment-health/environmental-justice/index.htm>

## How is our community affected? What can we do?

Think globally, Act locally.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://ansp.org/get-involved/small-actions-spark-big-changes/>

## What are some environmental justice causes we can tackle in our own city?

Park, neighborhood and school cleanups

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://water.phila.gov/adoption/>

## What are some environmental justice causes we can tackle in our own school?

Recycling programs, community gardens, compost piles and less single use plastic

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:

[http://archive.phillywatersheds.org/what\\_were\\_doing/green\\_infrastructure/programs/greenschools](http://archive.phillywatersheds.org/what_were_doing/green_infrastructure/programs/greenschools)

## What are some environmental justice causes we can tackle in our own home?

Recycling, plant a garden, make a compost pile and use less single use plastic

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:

<https://ansp.org/get-involved/small-actions-spark-big-changes/>

## Where are people most affected? Why are these places being affected in our area while other areas are not as affected?

Typically, in areas that are lower income neighborhoods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/PA-Environmental-Justice-Areas.aspx>



## Who are some important people or organizations to know when talking about environmental justice?

Robert Bullard, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., United Church of Christ Commission on Racial Justice (UCC), West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT), and so many more.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/four-environmental-justice-champions-you-should-know>

## What are some important historical events when talking about environmental justice?

1982 Warren County North Carolina protests of dumping of hazardous waste

1990 mainstream environmental organizations developed their first environmental justice initiatives

1991 First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/environmental-justice-movement>

## How can we tackle environmental justice causes in our world?

Get involved, know the issues, provide opportunities, share information and track progress.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-your-community>

**Why is it important to talk about environmental justice? If my community is not directly affected, why is it still important?**

We all live on this one planet, and we need to work together to make sure everyone has equal access to all resources.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>

**What are some activities to do to help my child understand environmental justice?**

Use online games, stories and coloring pages to get them thinking about the topic of environmental justice.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/index.htm>

**What are some organizations working on environmental justice issues in our city?**

Many, including Philadelphia Climate Works, Philly Thrive and even the Academy of Natural Sciences.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT:**

<http://phillyclimateworks.org/>  
<http://www.phillythrive.org>  
<https://350philadelphia.org/>