

EARTH CHARTER FOR CHILDREN

We are living at a very important moment in Earth's history. Every day, the people of the world are moving closer together. We need to unite across cultures to choose our future: to protect nature; to respect human rights; to create a world where all can live together in peace and justice. We have a responsibility to care for life - both at present and into the future.

The Earth is our home

The Earth is only a small part of the immense universe in which we live. The Earth itself is full of life, with a rich variety of plants, animals and peoples. In order to survive, we as human beings need the soil, the water, the air, the plants and the animals. It is our duty to take care of life on Earth.

The Global Situation

Today, our way of living often harms the environment. The way that we produce and consume goods depletes the Earth of its supplies of water, air and soil, endangering the lives of many plant and animal species. The growing world population continues to drain the Earth of its natural resources. At the same time, we are faced with war, famine and disease.

What can we do?

The choice is ours: we can start making changes so that we can build a better future for everyone. The *Earth Charter* gives us a path to follow - www.earthcharter.org

Everybody is responsible

To change our world, we need to be responsible for our actions, because everything that we do is interconnected - everything on our planet is woven together into the fabric of life. We need to think about the way that we use resources and the way that we care for plants and animals. We need to think about the way that we treat other people. If we all take responsibility for our own actions, we can start to work together to care for the present and future wellbeing of humanity and all living things on this planet. Together we can all share in the hope for the future.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS

1. **Respect the Earth and all living things: people, animals and plants.**
 - a. Understand the importance and the interconnectedness of all living things.
 - b. Accept all people as unique and valuable.
2. **Care for all living things, with understanding, compassion and love.**
 - a. Use natural resources wisely, taking care not to cause harm to the Earth
 - b. Protect the rights of people and accept their differences.
3. **Form groups of people who act justly, treat others equally and work together peacefully.**
 - a. Recognise everyone's right to be free and the right to choose how they will develop and grow.
 - b. Include all people and work towards safe, peaceful and fair communities.
4. **Co-operate so that all people can enjoy the beauty and the fruits of the Earth.**
 - a. Act responsibly for the present, making sure not to neglect the needs of future generations.
 - b. Pass on knowledge and encourage future generations to be caretakers of the Earth.

- Adapted in November 2002 for young people from the first 4 Principles of the original version of the Earth Charter.
- For the complete document, see www.earthcharter.org
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