Why should we make time for this?

Environmental wellness often is overlooked, especially when one is overscheduled. If you ask yourself, “Who has time to care for the environment?” then follow the steps below to make environmental wellness a priority in your life and the lives of family members. Our environments shape us; implement these tips to create a safe and healthy environment in just a few minutes each day.

How can I improve environmental health with little time?

Clean Together
- Set aside 10 minutes each day to clean together as a family. Wash dishes, fold laundry or carry out the compost and recycling. You might be surprised at what you can accomplish in only 10 minutes when the entire family works together. It is not only a great time to bond, but the house stays cleaner longer when everyone takes responsibility to clean.

Go Prepared
- Keep a garbage bag in the car. At the end of every ride, remove any trash along with everything else that does not belong in the car. This simple act takes a minute and makes the next ride in the car much more enjoyable.

Avoid Waste
- Be mindful of the amount of resources you and your family use. Eating out may be convenient, but it tends to result in excessive amounts of paper and plastic products being used. After using these products, take a minute to locate a recycling bin and opt for recycling instead of trashing. Modeling this important step to your children promotes habits that last a lifetime and saves natural resources for future generations.

Declutter
- Take a few minutes each week to get rid of items you don’t need anymore. From old newspapers to toys the kids have outgrown, extra “stuff” becomes a barrier to finding the things you need and can cause unnecessary stress. Declutter by keeping a “donate” tote in a handy spot. Encourage everyone to deposit unneeded items in the tote and drive it to a donation site on the first of each month.

Stay Safe
- Keep yourself and those around you safe. Always take a second to buckle your seat belt when in the car, use helmets when riding bikes and never text while driving. Be an advocate for safety and hold the same expectations for family members. Create a safe environment by being a good role model.

Do Little Things
- Take a second to make sure the lights are turned off before leaving a room. Close the blinds on hot days, and turn off the water when brushing your teeth. Doing so takes a fraction of a minute and can save money and natural resources. Be mindful of simple waste and do something about it. Talk about ways to save money and improve your environment at your family wellness meetings.
Environmental Wellness for Overscheduled Families

Family Conversation Starters

- What tasks would you like to be responsible for to help keep our living environment clean?
- Why do you think recycling is important? How can we do a better job of recycling? Reducing our waste? Reusing what we have rather than buying new?
- What reminders can we generate to help us remember to always buckle up in the car or wear helmets when riding bike or in-line skating?

Family Activity

Have a Green Picnic

On a nice day, enjoy a green family picnic. When you’re preparing for your adventure, keep the following in mind:

- **Reduce waste** – Avoid using paper or plastic tableware. Use biodegradable tableware instead.
- **Compost your trash** – Throw fruit peels, bread heels and compostable plates in a reusable bag and bring them back home to add to your family’s compost pile.
- **Keep it natural** – Turn off electronics and enjoy nature and each other’s company. Use your green family picnic as an opportunity to explore the ecosystems near you. Talk a walk or hike after eating and get in touch with nature and loved ones at the same time.

Family Action Plan for Environmental Wellness

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<th>What do we already do well?</th>
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Who will do each task and by what date? How will we know if we are successful?

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