

**CALL FOR INPUTS:
THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON CHILDREN
AND RELEVANT POLICY SOLUTIONS**

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All around the world, **children's lives are under threat due to climate change**. Nearly 710 million children are currently living in countries at the highest risk of suffering the impact of the climate crisis. However, ***every child will inherit a planet with more frequent extreme weather events*** than ever before.

Extreme events, including wildfires, floods and hurricanes, have become a frightening new normal. Hotter temperatures, air pollution and violent storms are leading to immediate, life-threatening dangers for children, including difficulty breathing, malnutrition and higher risk of infectious diseases.

Climate change is happening and nearly every child in the world will be affected.

Talking about climate change with our own children can feel hard for many parents. It's natural to want to protect kids from harm and worry. But if your child is a certain age, chances are they are already hearing about climate change, whether at school, online or from their friends.

Unsurprisingly, children can feel many emotions about climate change, such as being anxious, frightened, sad and angry, which are very natural reactions to something as uncertain and devastating as climate change.

While you can't solve climate change for your child, you can help them discover the facts, know that they are not alone and find ways to take action.

What Are the Effects of Climate Change on Future Generations?

- **Extreme temperatures leave many families living in poverty with less food, less clean water, lower incomes and worsening health.**
- **Children's immune systems are still developing, leaving their rapidly growing bodies more sensitive to disease and pollution.**
- **Extreme events can destroy homes, schools, child care centers and infrastructure critical to children's well-being.**
- **Droughts and flooding can destroy crops and cut access to clean water.**
- **Many families will have to choose between starvation and migration.**

Statistics About Climate Change and Children

- The climate crisis magnifies inequality, poverty, displacement and may increase the likelihood of conflict.
- 90% of diseases resulting from the climate crisis are likely to affect children under the age of five.
- By 2050, **a further 24 million children are projected to be undernourished** as a result of the climate crisis.
- By 2040, it is estimated that **one in four children will be living in areas with extreme water shortages**.
- Almost **160 million children are exposed to increasingly severe and prolonged droughts**.
- **The education of around 38 million children is disrupted each year** by the climate crisis.
- The climate crisis is forcing families to migrate. By 2050, **there could be 143 million more migrants** due to the climate crisis.

Relevant Policy Solution To Tackle Climate Change

Here are some tips on how to have an honest and hopeful conversation about climate change without ignoring the reality and scale of the issue.

1. **Do your homework:** No one has all the answers about climate change and it's okay if you don't either. There are many reliable resources available online including talks, videos and articles that can help you brush up on the science. NASA has some great child-friendly resources on the topic. Speak with other parents to find out how they approach the topic with their children.
2. **Remember:** It's okay if you can't answer all the questions your child might have – take it as an opportunity to discover the answers together.
3. **Listen:** To start the conversation about climate change with your child, find out what they already know and how they feel about the topic. You might be surprised by how much your child already knows and can express. Use it as a chance to listen to their fears and hopes for the planet. Give them your full attention and don't dismiss or try to minimize any worries they have. Let them know that they can always come to you to talk about anything.
4. **Use simple science:** You know your child best, so make sure the information is appropriate for them. A good starting point can be to find ways to relate climate change to their daily lives and explore the basic facts together. For example: "Humans are burning fossil fuels like coal and oil to run cars, fly planes and light homes. These all release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that wrap around the planet like a bubble, making the climate hotter. A hotter planet means changes in weather, such as more floods and more storms. As the planet gets warmer, the polar ice caps melt and sea levels rise. It's a serious problem, but many scientists and lots of young people are working hard to find solutions and make positive changes. And there are many things we can do as well." Pictures, maps and videos can help to visualize the issue and make it more tangible. A great resource to explore is Climate Visuals, which has compiled a library of images on the topic, from climate impacts to climate solutions.

5. **Go outside:** Try to expose your child to nature as much as possible. Encouraging them to play outside helps nurture their enjoyment of and respect for nature. When you're outside together pause and point out interesting sights, whether it's a tree, a cloud, a cobweb or a bird. The simple act of slowing down and taking the time to appreciate nature can help children to develop a curiosity and wonder for the natural world. Plant seeds together to see how something grows from nothing.

6. **Focus on solutions:** For every problem you discuss, try to show a solution. Explore with your child examples of people who are working on ways to address climate change. Discuss positive and inspiring stories you see on the news or in your own community.
Talk about what steps you are taking as a family, such as reducing waste in your home, saving water, recycling, or switching off unused lights and appliances. This helps to reinforce the idea that everyone can do something to help address climate change.
Discuss ideas for other measures you can take as a family or in the community. Could you choose to walk or bike rather than take a car? Could you plant a tree?

7. **Empower action:** Young people around the world are taking climate action into their own hands and to the doorstep of governments. Others are building new ways to use energy more efficiently, sharing solutions on social media and walking in weekly climate marches. Let your child know that many young people are standing up for our planet and they can too. If they show interest, introduce them to stories of climate change activists.