Planet Blanket



Learning objectives:

To begin to understand that some things people do can make the air (atmosphere) around the Earth warmer

To explore that too much warm air around Earth can make the planet too hot

To talk about simple ways we can help, such as walking, saving energy and reusing things

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Power Protectors

Practitioner knowledge:

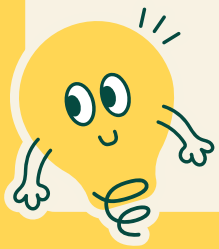
Climate change is a big and complex idea, so with young children it is best to keep the language simple and focus on caring for our planet. This activity uses blankets to show that Earth needs some air around it to stay comfortable, but too much pollution (greenhouse gases) can make it too warm.

You do not need to teach the scientific words in depth. Simple phrases such as “dirty air”, “too much heat” and “ways to help the planet” are enough for this age group.

What you will need:

- Up to six blankets.
- A child or adult to pretend to be the planet.
- Toys or pictures such as cars, planes, bikes, lights and household items.





Activity:

We are going to focus on four main problems: transportation, energy, ‘stuff’ and water.

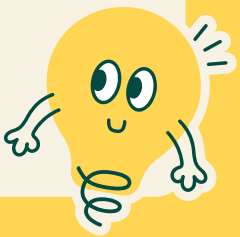
Transport:
Cars, lorries, ships and planes release heat, trapping gases that go up into the sky (we can see these if we look at the back of a car when the engine is running).
We can help by walking, scooting, cycling, sharing lifts or using buses and trains where we can.

Energy:
We use energy for lights, heating, cooking and charging things. Sometimes making this energy can put dirty or warm air (carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere.
We can help by turning things off when we do not need them and not wasting energy.

Stuff:
Making toys, clothes and other things uses energy. Throwing things away can also cause problems for our planet.
We can help by reusing, repairing, sharing and only buying what we need.

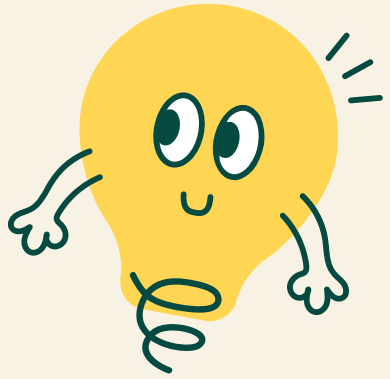
Water:
Clean water is precious. Using too much water means more water must be cleaned and moved, and that uses energy. Wasting water is not good for our planet.
We can help by turning taps off properly, using only the water we need and telling an adult if we see water being wasted.

You can choose how many ideas to use with your children.



Step by step

- Choose a child or adult to pretend to be the planet.
- Talk about how clothes or blankets keep us warm. Explain that Earth has air around it, and it should have just the right amount to keep our planet at the perfect temperature, so not too hot and not too cold.
- Show a toy or picture, such as a car or plane. Say that some things make dirty air, and when the air gets dirty the planet gets warmer.
- Put one blanket around the “planet” to show the Earth getting warmer.
- Show another example, turning the lights on, and add another blanket.
- Keep going with as many examples as you feel are right for your group.



Step by step continued...

- Ask the child being the planet if they feel hot, warm or uncomfortable and link this back to our planet getting warmer.
- Talk together about what could help the planet feel better, such as walking, saving energy or reusing things.
- Trees and plants can help us to clean the air as they breathe in the warm gases so is there a way that they can help us? Take away a blanket each time the children think of a helpful action so they can see the planet cooling down.



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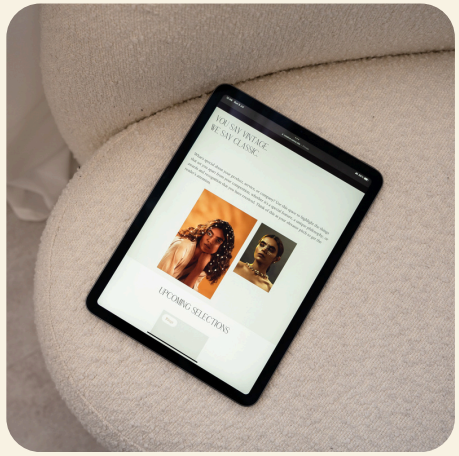












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