

Ontario

REVISED 2008

Celebrating



ecoschools

festival ideas
(elementary)



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Acknowledgements

This guide is an adaptation of *EcoSchools: Celebrating EcoSchools Festival Ideas (elementary)* developed by the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The City of Toronto and the TDSB have donated this resource to the Ontario EcoSchools Program as part of an in-kind contribution to the project.

Ontario EcoSchools: Celebrating EcoSchools–Festival Ideas (elementary)

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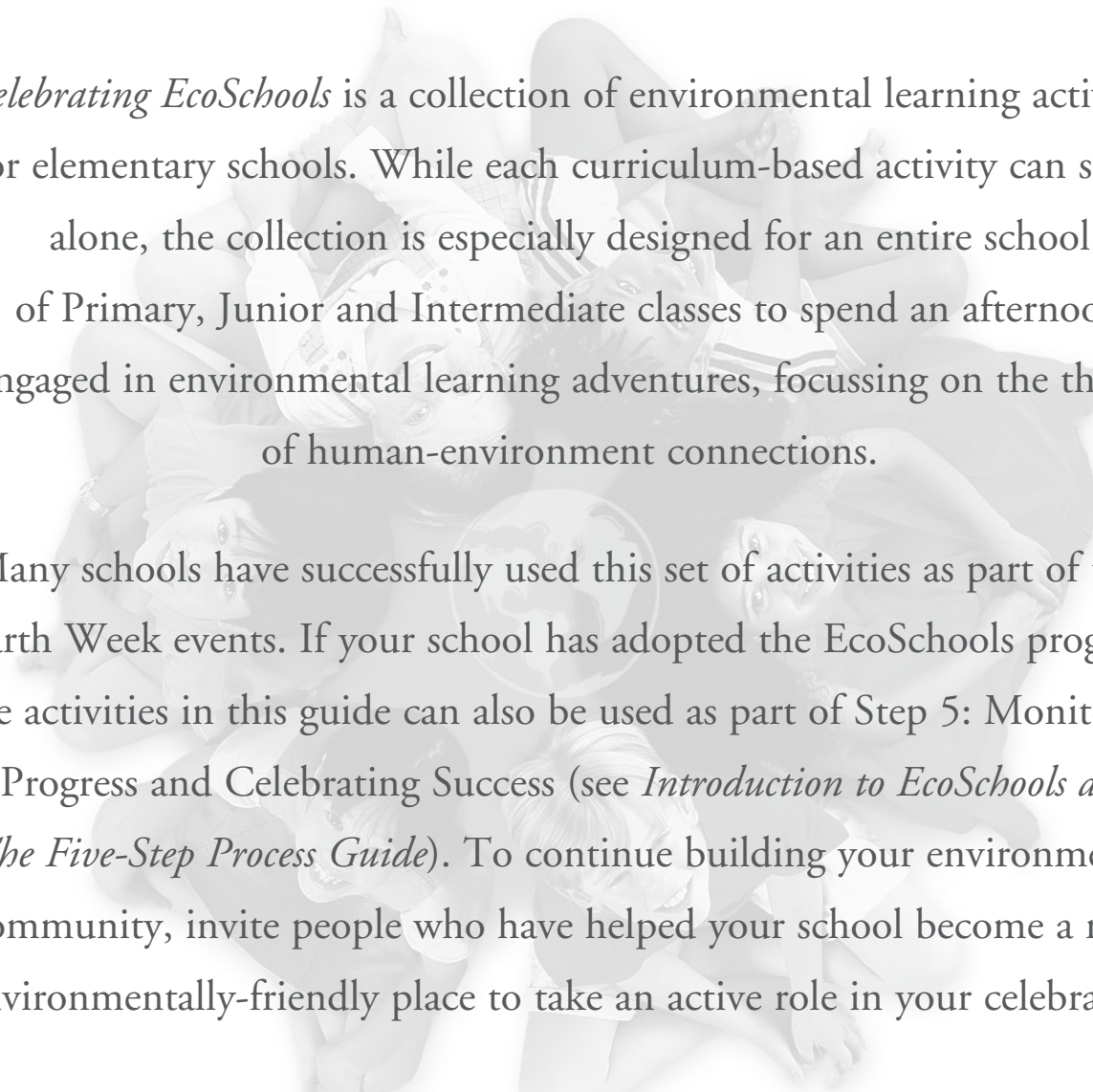
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Celebrating EcoSchools



Celebrating EcoSchools is a collection of environmental learning activities for elementary schools. While each curriculum-based activity can stand alone, the collection is especially designed for an entire school of Primary, Junior and Intermediate classes to spend an afternoon engaged in environmental learning adventures, focussing on the theme of human-environment connections.

Many schools have successfully used this set of activities as part of their Earth Week events. If your school has adopted the EcoSchools program, the activities in this guide can also be used as part of Step 5: Monitoring Progress and Celebrating Success (see *Introduction to EcoSchools and The Five-Step Process Guide*). To continue building your environmental community, invite people who have helped your school become a more environmentally-friendly place to take an active role in your celebration!

Have fun!

GUIDES FOR GETTING STARTED

1 *Introduction to EcoSchools and the Five-Step Process*

This concise guide provides an overview of the Ontario EcoSchools program and sets out a practical method for successful implementation: (1) establish an EcoTeam, (2) assess the school's needs, (3) identify priorities and develop an action plan, (4) implement the action plan, and (5) monitor and evaluate progress.

2 *Waste Minimization Guide*

This guide outlines the 10 Ontario EcoSchools waste minimization guidelines. It provides the school's EcoTeam with tips for assessing the school's current waste minimization efforts, sample reviews and action plans and a set of tools for implementing improved waste minimization practices.

3 *Energy Conservation Guide*

Similar in format to the *Waste Minimization Guide*, this resource outlines the 10 Ontario EcoSchools energy conservation guidelines. It provides the school's EcoTeam with tips for assessing the school's current energy conservation efforts, sample reviews and action plans and a set of tools for implementing improved energy conservation practices.



4 *Waste Minimization by Grade (1-8)*

This resource is organized around “big ideas” about waste and waste minimization that are based on identified clusters of learning expectations in both Science and Technology and Social Studies and Geography. Using these ideas as a focus helps the teacher incorporate ecological thinking into existing curriculum. Annotated Internet resources offer background facts and student learning activities.

5 *Energy Conservation by Grade (1-8)*

Like *Waste Minimization by Grade*, this guide is organized around “big ideas” about energy and energy conservation that are based on identified clusters of learning expectations in both Science and Technology and Social Studies and Geography. Using these ideas as a focus helps the teacher incorporate ecological thinking into existing curriculum. Annotated Internet resources offer background facts and student learning activities.

CONNECTING ECOSCHOOLS TO THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

CONNECTING ECOSCHOOLS TO THE SECONDARY CURRICULUM

6 *Climate Change in Grade 9 Geography (Academic and Applied)*

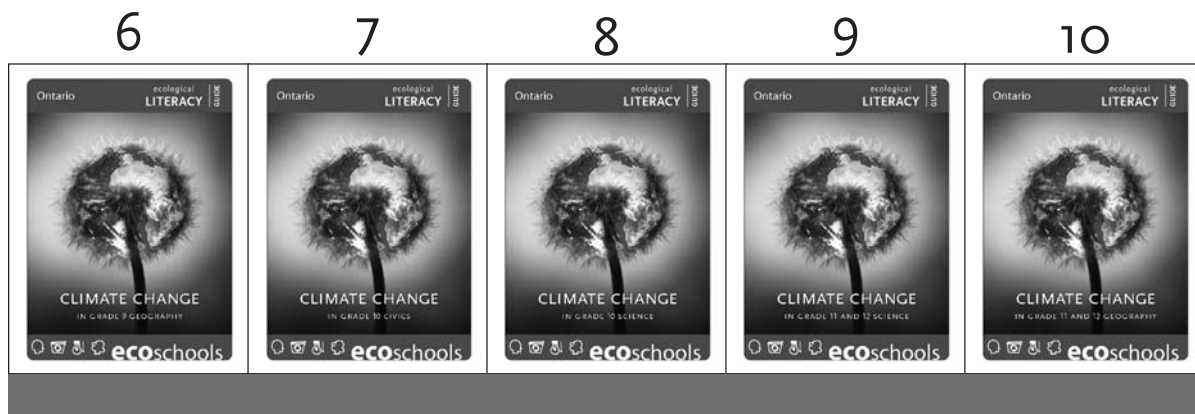
This resource consists of a culminating task for summative evaluation plus a unit-by-unit breakdown of the conceptual understandings about climate change needed to ensure student success. Students select a Canadian town or small city and develop an annotated map that indicates the changes in the human and natural environments that would reduce greenhouse gases and thus slow climate change. Resource list, student worksheets and evaluation rubric are provided. See #15 for supporting multimedia presentations.

7 *Climate Change in Grade 10 Civics*

This unit introduces students to the concept of citizenship through a series of well-supported activities where they analyze the accomplishments of environmental activists and organizations. A simple Public Policy Primer helps students see points at which they can influence issues. Students apply their knowledge in responding to the Government of Canada's One-Tonne Challenge for reducing climate change gases. An Environmental Citizenship Portfolio containing each student's class work and other materials sums up her/his understanding of environmental citizenship. See #15 for supporting multimedia presentations.

8 *Climate Change in Grade 10 Science (Academic and Applied)*

This resource provides two possible culminating tasks: students are introduced to an actual problem and asked to propose solutions to either The Impact of Transportation Choices or Forest Management and Climate Change. Climate change related concepts have been identified in each strand. Charts link authorized texts and the Teacher Resource for each to relevant learning expectations. A student Checklist of Preparation, annotated Internet resources and evaluation rubrics are also provided. See #15 for supporting multimedia presentations.



9 *Climate Change in Grade 11 and 12 Science*

This resource ranges over 8 different Science courses (University, University/College, College and Workplace), highlighting learning expectations that can be met using climate change issues as the examples. Focus questions help students connect the learning of facts and concepts in a meaningful way. The questions also suggest ways to adapt the existing curriculum to explore the data, evidence, interactions and technologies related to climate change issues. Lists of resources that suit the needs of the courses are included. See #15 for supporting multimedia presentations.

10 *Climate Change in Grade 11 and 12 Geography*

This resource surveys 5 Geography courses (University, University/College, and Open). Overall and specific expectations for each course are accompanied by guiding ideas linking these expectations to different parts of the climate change story. Examples are provided for developing topics, and teaching and learning strategies recommended for different student needs. Resources for planning class activities and assignments are listed. See #15 for supporting multimedia presentations.

GUIDES TO ENRICH YOUR PROGRAM

11 *Schoolground Greening: Designing for Shade and Energy Conservation*

Based on a guide developed by Evergreen and the Toronto District School Board, this resource will help schools design for increased shade to protect students and staff from ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and to shade school buildings to save energy and make them more comfortable. Tips for involving the school community in the design process, surveying user needs, completing a site analysis, creating site plans and developing a fundraising strategy are included.

12 *Celebrating EcoSchools: Festival Guide (Elementary)*

This collection of learning activities for elementary schools is designed for Earth Week or another EcoSchools celebration. While each activity can stand alone, the collection is especially designed for an entire school to engage in environmental learning adventures, focussing on the theme of human-environment connections. Based on a resource developed by the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board.

13 *The 20/20 Planner*

Based on a Toronto Public Health resource, *20/20 The Way to Clean Air* offers teachers a way to help students apply their learning about energy conservation at home. The planner is a “take-home” guide filled with simple tips and activity sheets that offer a range of actions that students and their families can undertake to reduce energy and vehicle use by 20%.

14 *Certification Guide*

The *Certification Guide* is based on a resource developed by the Clean Air Partnership and the Toronto District School Board. It provides sample benchmarks and a scoring system for schools wishing to assess their environmental performance in a limited number of areas. The point system establishes Bronze, Silver and Gold levels of EcoSchools.



Free copies of all Ontario EcoSchools guides may be downloaded in PDF format. Go to www.ontarioecoschools.org

15 **Multimedia presentations:** *Changing Climate, Changing Attitudes; The Impacts of Climate Change; The Science of Climate Change*

Three multimedia presentations have been designed to accompany the EcoSchools curriculum resources. *Changing Climate, Changing Attitudes* provides students and teachers with a general overview of global climate change and its impacts on Ontario society. *The Impacts of Climate Change* has been developed explicitly to complement the Grade 9 Geography course but can be used with all secondary students to examine the impacts of climate change on the natural and human worlds. *The Science of Climate Change*, while developed to support the Grade 10 Science course, is suitable for all secondary science students. These presentations include potential solutions and steps that citizens can take to help slow climate change.

MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS TO ANCHOR YOUR PROGRAM

Celebrating ECOSCHOOLS

Festival Ideas
(elementary)

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“Never doubt that a small group
of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world; indeed,
it is the only thing that ever has.”

–Margaret Mead

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Celebrating EcoSchools: Festival Ideas is a collection of environmental learning classroom activities for elementary schools especially suitable for Earth Week or another special EcoSchools event. These ideas can be part of Step 5 of the five-step process in implementing the Ontario EcoSchools program.

While each activity can stand alone, it is hoped that an entire school will take an afternoon to celebrate with an environmental learning adventure, focusing on the theme of making connections. Developing students' understanding about the connections between the Earth and their everyday lives is never out of season, so teachers are encouraged to use these activities whenever they have the opportunity to include them in their classroom teaching.

The activities outlined in *Celebrating EcoSchools*

- ▶ provide an opportunity to contribute to the development of our students' ecological literacy as they learn about ecosystems and environmental issues
- ▶ engage students in student-centered cooperative activities
- ▶ encourage students to identify their connections to the Earth
- ▶ provide an opportunity for students to go outside
- ▶ solicit cognitive and emotional responses to activities
- ▶ allow students an opportunity to reflect on their learning through discussion and journal-writing

Archived Internet resources, professional development materials and current information about Ontario EcoSchools may be found on the website: www.ontarioecoschools.org

Ecological Literacy

Learning about the relationships between humans and the rest of our natural world is at the heart of ecological literacy. Through classroom learning and active participation in the way the school operates, students can explore the impacts of their choices regarding energy use, waste creation and other environmental issues. Ecological *inquiry* reveals our dependence on the healthy functioning of the Earth's living systems which give us clean air, water, soil, food, and all the other resources we depend on. As our understanding of the inter-relatedness of all life increases, we can become literate in the ways to care for the Earth that consider the wellbeing of future generations. Ecological *literacy* allows us to understand the urgency of developing protective, sustainable, and restorative relationships with the natural systems that are affected by our daily activities.

Planning for an Environmental Learning Adventure

Classroom Introduction

Each teacher is asked to introduce the EcoSchools celebration in her/his class before students begin the adventure. Survey general environmental awareness in the class, then discuss Earth Day and why we celebrate it. Stress the idea of making personal connections to environmental issues through knowledge and actions.

Environmental Activities

All activities in this collection are recommended by environmental educators from across Ontario. In the spirit of experiential environmental education, each activity has allotted time for reflective discussion, with questions listed in the activity outline. The number of activities each school chooses to prepare is optional. One idea is to mount the same number of activities as you have rotations.

Follow-up Discussion Questions

At the end of the Environmental Learning Adventure each class needs the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon its adventure. Encourage students to relate how these activities might inform their future decisions and habits.

Extensions

All learning needs to be integrated and reinforced over time. The activities in this collection make suggestions for future classroom projects/activities. Teachers are asked to consider incorporating these extensions into their classroom work.

Curriculum Connections

The relevant Science and Technology and Social Studies curriculum expectations are identified in each activity. Often activities may be easily modified to cover additional expectations.

The table of the facing page summarizes the curriculum expectations covered in the various activities detailed in this document. Additional expectations in other subject areas may also be addressed in the activity; see the *Environmental education opportunities throughout the elementary curriculum* section on page 6.

	Curriculum Expectations							
Activity	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8
1. Connecting with our Actions: A Million Year Picnic	X							
2. Building bird feeders with recycled materials	X							
3. Food Chains: The Sun Powers All!	X	X	X				X	
4. Connecting with Habitats: Home Sweet Home	X	X	X					
5. Creating a Mini-forest	X	X	X					
6. Water Water Everywhere		X		X	X			X
7. Ecosystems in Action: Web of Life				X			X	
8. Ecological Footprints: Human Wants and Needs affecting the Earth				X	X		X	
9. Embodied Energy: The Life of Fruits and Vegetables			X	X	X		X	
10. Interpretive Hikes	Dependent on type of hike, location, etc.							
11. Connecting to the Everyday Things in Our Lives							X	X
12. Connecting School Issues and Action Opportunities							X	
13. Stakeholders and Perspectives: Force Field Analysis							X	

Environmental education opportunities throughout the elementary curriculum

Environmental education is...a content area that can be taught. It is an approach to critical thinking, citizenship and personal responsibility, and can be modeled. It is a context that can enrich and enliven education in all subject areas, and offer students the opportunity to develop a deeper connection with themselves, their role in society, and their interdependence on one another and the Earth's natural systems.

Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools,
Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education (Toronto: June 2007), p. 10

To identify environmental education opportunities throughout the curriculum the Ministry of Education has produced a resource document, *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (Toronto: June 2008). This document lists expectations that explicitly connect to environmental education in science and technology, social studies, history and geography. It also outlines suggestions for environmental topics to be connected to other subject areas where the environment can be used as the context for learning.

The activities found in *Celebrating EcoSchools* identify specific expectations in science and technology, social studies, history and geography. Often additional curriculum expectations from other subject areas may also be covered in the course of the activity, using the environment as the context for learning as in the suggestions below.

Language (2006)

...in each of the strands the learning context (e.g., a topic or thematic unit related to the environment) and/or learning materials (e.g., books, websites, media) could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding. Also, in each of the strands, there are some expectations that can provide opportunities for exploring environmental education – for example, expectations on making inferences, making connections, analysing and evaluating texts, developing a point of view, and doing research.

Mathematics (2005)

...in each of the strands the learning context could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding (e.g. problems relating to climate or waste management could be the focus of student learning). In addition, the mathematical processes (e.g. problem solving, connecting) address skills that can be used to support the development of environmental literacy.

The Arts (1998)

...in each strand of the arts curriculum the learning context and/or learning materials could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding. Through music, the visual arts, drama, and dance, students can represent their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the environment and their understandings of issues related to the environment.

Some ways in which elementary students can make connections with environmental education through the arts include:

- ▶ creating sculptures made of recycled and found materials;
- ▶ composing or accompanying music that reflects nature and/or human interaction with the natural environment;
- ▶ performing site-specific dance works that integrate the natural environment in which they are performed;
- ▶ dramatizing legends, stories, or tales about the environment.

Health and Physical Education (1998)

HEALTHY LIVING: The healthy Eating and Growth and Development components of the Healthy Living strand lend themselves to aspects of environmental education inasmuch as they provide students with opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION: As students acquire living skills through physical activities, they can develop an appreciation of the natural environment, gain an experiential knowledge of the environment and develop the problem-solving skills necessary for an environmentally aware citizen.

Native Languages (2001)

...in each of the strands the learning context (e.g., a topic or thematic unit related to the environment) and/or learning materials (e.g., books, websites, media) could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding. Learning about aspects of Native culture and communities may provide for students opportunities to make connections with local places.

French as a Second Language – Extended French, French Immersion (2001); Core French (1998) [where applicable]

...in each of the strands the learning context (e.g., a topic or thematic unit related to the environment) and/or learning materials (e.g., books, websites, media) could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding.

Excerpted from *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (Toronto: June 2008).

Scheduling an Environmental Learning Adventure

- ▶ Set aside a half day, or if possible, an entire day.
- ▶ Set up one activity station for each class that is participating.
- ▶ Repeat a single activity several times in the same room/area as students rotate moving from activity to activity
- ▶ Have students from the EcoTeam, other student leaders and parent volunteers conduct students to various activities inside and outside the school.

Tips And Ideas

- *Use Earth Day to foster leadership within your school. Older students can master some of the primary activities before Earth Day and then come to the younger class and help lead an activity!*
- *Plan for Activity One to be in students' home classroom to save rotation time.*
- *Consider sending a letter home before your environmental learning adventure to inform parents and to spark environmental discussions at home as well as at school.*
- *Plan to have one teacher or administrator in your school act as the floater during your EcoSchools Festival. Any unexpected problems can be dealt with if one person has the opportunity to oversee the event.*