

## Why we need to teach children about sustainability

By [Amishi Parasrampuria](#) | Jun 4, 2018

Us: "Why is waste bad?"

Child 1: "Waste is bad because it makes the place smell and harms animals"

Us: "What can we do about waste?"

Child 2: "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"

Us: "Okay. But do you know how this is done? and what do you do before recycling?"

All Children: \*Silence\*

This was a small snippet from one of our recent interactive workshops with young children around waste segregation. My brand [Upcycler's Lab](#), makes play based learning tools around sustainability for kids between 5 and 9. While most of the children we have worked with so far have been from private schools where they already have access to information regarding sustainability and conservation, many of them are just beginning to understand these complex issues. With consumers moving towards eco consciousness, governments moving towards extreme policies for environmental change and companies moving towards circular models for design and business, we need to equip our children for the world of tomorrow.



Of course one aspect is their school work but I believe that this change will impact them dramatically in the long run. For example, waste management alone is a USD 13 billion dollar industry in India which is largely disorganized and is just about starting to get formalized. This means that a 9 year old child today will in 10–12 years graduate into a world where the formal waste industry will be a booming one with a lot of demand for employees and entrepreneurs who understand this space. This of course is just one industry within the broader umbrella of sustainability. We have already seen what the recent Plastic Ban in Maharashtra has done for manufacturers of non plastic disposables, many of them have had to increase their production capacity overnight.



Unfortunately, a lot of school curriculum, although delivered much more uniquely, still trains children for the jobs of the past and the present. I believe, we are moving into an era of environmental crisis where there will be a huge demand for human resources to solve pressing problems that the human race faces. Environmental sustainability is one such problem. By helping our children learn about sustainability, conservation and circular design, we are teaching them how to deal with the problems of the future. We need start at a young age and we need to do this in a way that children understand. Our focus should be on equipping children with the tools while allowing them to come up with solutions for a better world.





*\*At the end of our interactive workshop for kids\**

Us: "So kids what did we learn today?"

Child 1: " That there are 3 types of waste including hazardous waste and that is important to segregate because its easier to recycle and better for rag pickers, birds and animals"

Us: "And what are some of the things you will do at home to make the world a cleaner place?"

Child 2: "I will ask mumma to start using a cloth bag instead of plastic"

Child 3: "I will say no to straws at the restaurant"

Child 4: "I will not allow mom to use small plastic bottles for my birthday party"

**Category:** Teacher Development

**Subject:** Environmental Science  
Science & Technology

**Board:** All boards

**Grade/Standard:** Early Childhood Education

Class 1-2

Class 3-5

Class 6-8

Class 9-10

Class 11-12

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