

ANXIOUS FOR ACTION

Eco-Anxiety Parent Guide



Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver,

Eco-anxiety is a relatively new term that you may have heard before. It sounds serious and even a little scary. While eco-anxiety is not an official diagnosable disorder, it is still very real. But what is it exactly? Eco-anxiety includes feelings of worry, fear, and even despair that someone experiences as a result of their exposure to the realities of climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental problems.

We know that eco-anxiety impacts people of all ages—including myself and many of our Earth Rangers members who share their thoughts, feelings, and stories with us every day. And the reality is, eco-anxiety is a totally rational response to the real environmental challenges our kids see around them.

My advice to you is simple: do not feel afraid or intimidated by your child's concerns. They are normal, they are reasonable, and you may (or likely do) share them.

The question is: what do we do about it? Well, I have good news: new research conducted by Earth Rangers, Ipsos Canada, and leading climate change and mental health experts provides us all with tangible, effective, and fun ways to turn eco-anxiety into eco-action.

That is what this guide is all about.



Tovah Barocas
President of Earth Rangers



Earth Rangers is the kids' conservation organization, committed to instilling environmental knowledge, positivity, and the confidence to take action in every child in Canada. We do this by offering a free suite of programs for kids that are educational and engaging—but more importantly, we show them that it's not too late to help the planet.

A Little Bit About the Research

In partnership with Ipsos Canada and leading experts, Earth Rangers conducted a scan of the global literature on eco-anxiety in children, as well as a survey in 2020 to capture attitudes and actions around environmental issues by children (age 6-11) and their parents. Participants included Earth Rangers members, as well as non-members. Comparing the groups' results, we developed an Eco-Anxiety Index and an Eco-Action Index to better understand the impacts of Earth Rangers Programs.

Our 3 Key Findings

1. Some level of concern for the environment can actually be useful and healthy when it leads to environmental action.
2. Compared to other children, Earth Rangers members feel more concerned about the environment AND more empowered to take action.
3. Empowering kids means empowering the whole family.

To see the full data and analysis, download the white paper: [Anxious for Action: Channeling Children's Environmental Concerns Into Empowerment](#)



REMEMBER THIS:

Kids' concerns about the environment are real. With the right support, so is their ability to act.

The 5 E's to Drive Eco-Action

1. EMPATHY

Provide space and opportunities to discuss climate change and other environmental concerns, and allow your kids to identify and express their feelings about these issues.

2. EDUCATION

Offer opportunities to learn about climate change and suggest actions that kids and families can take to protect the natural environment.

Kids' concerns about our environment are real. With the right support, so is their ability to act. From our study, we have created a handy framework so you can help transform eco-anxiety into eco-action!

3. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Find opportunities to spend more time outdoors to help foster a deeper connection to nature and spark new, tangible ways that kids can protect the natural environment.

4. EXCITEMENT

Make conservation activities and learning about the natural environment something for kids to look forward to.

5. EMPOWERMENT

Give kids ways to teach you and other adults how to protect nature.



The challenge is big, but the mission is simple.

The [Get Your Ears On campaign](#) is raising awareness and providing tangible resources to empower kids – and their adults – to take positive environmental action and tackle eco-anxiety today.

Tips to Put Theory into Practice

Here are some easy ways to move from theory to action in your daily life:



Empathy

- Don't be afraid to talk to your children about negative environmental news stories, like floods or wildfires. Ask how they feel about these stories and validate those feelings by sharing your own.
- Do the same with positive stories, like when the government announces new climate change policy or an endangered species is making a recovery.
- Whether the news is positive or negative, make environmental stories a regular part of conversation, so that children know that these issues are important and that their concerns are normal and accepted.



Education

- Encourage your children to learn more about environmental issues in a fun and engaging way. Check out the [Earth Rangers Podcast](#) or [Wild Wire Blog](#).
- When your kids learn about an issue, make sure to include a next step of discussing what actions they can take to help address it.



Environmental Stewardship

- Spending time in nature helps to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety and contributes to overall wellbeing. Take it one step further by learning about and taking action for nature at the same time.
 - o Create a [backyard habitat](#) for bugs or small animals, [planting a pollinator garden](#) or organizing a [shoreline clean-up](#).
 - o Forage for natural materials to [create fun and sustainable crafts](#).



Excitement

- When we make it a game - like a [Scavenger Hunt](#) - it creates opportunities for our kids to see conservation and learning about the environment as fun and exciting.
- Games are especially helpful in simplifying complex concepts—like those found in ecosystems and the environment!



Empowerment

- Kids love to feel like they know something adults don't. And often, they do!
- Some Earth Rangers Missions are specifically designed to make kids leaders in their households, allowing them to educate (or even trick!) you on how to be more environmentally responsible, like: [Carbon Footprint Investigation](#), [Water Taste Challenge](#), [More Plastic More Problems](#).



What's Next?

[Sign your child up to become an Earth Ranger!](#) Membership is free!

Not quite ready to join? [Sign up for free, family-friendly Eco-Activities](#) delivered right to your inbox.