



## *Project Ideas*

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### Project Spotlight: Playground Pick-Up

Celina, Isabel, Julia, and Rebecca, all of Massachusetts, cleaned up a playground in their neighborhood. First they picked up the trash. Then they hung a sign on a fence that read, "Please Keep Our Park Clean." They also had a bake sale to raise money to buy plants for their playground.

#### **Here's how to start your own clean-up project:**

1. **Think of a place that is important to you.** It might be a bus stop near your house, your school playground, a nearby beach, or any other place where you like to spend time.
2. **What can you do to help your favorite place look its best?** You could pick up trash, remove weeds, add a coat of paint, or donate plants.
3. **Get permission.** Get permission before you make big changes, like planting, weeding, or painting. Ask an adult to help you call a city official or the site owner. For example, if you are planting a tree in a park, you should contact the Department of Public Works.
4. **Tell your friends and family.** Tell your friends and family about your project and ask if they want to help. Find a day when your helpers will be free.
5. **Collect supplies.** Collect clean-up supplies like gloves, trash bags, paper towels, and glass cleaner.
6. **Let the clean-up begin!** Make sure to bring an adult with you. When your clean-up day arrives, make your favorite place look its best. Take "before" and "after" photos using your digital camera.
7. **Safety first.** Don't pick up any sharp objects, such as broken glass. If you find something sharp, ask an adult to take care of it for you.
8. **Think about it.**
  - ▶ Who did your clean-up help?
  - ▶ What did you see and hear during the clean-up?
  - ▶ How did the clean-up make you feel?
  - ▶ What did you learn that you did not know before?
  - ▶ What new questions or ideas do you have?
  - ▶ Is there anything you would do differently the next time?

9. **Celebrate!** Thank everyone who helped you. If you took pictures, you can send some to the friends and family members who volunteered with you. And remember to log your hours and share your story.
10. **Keep helping.** Go back to your area once a month to keep it clean. Write a letter to your local newspaper and tell them about your project. Tell them why this place is special to you and what people can do to help take care of it. Remember to send your "before" and "after" pictures, too.

### Project Spotlight: Plant a Tree

Ashley and her girl scout troop in Oregon planted trees in a neighborhood park to celebrate National Arbor Day. National Arbor Day is a holiday to encourage people to plant trees. Trees produce oxygen for us to breathe, remove pollution from the air, and provide food and shelter for wildlife.

#### Here's how you can plant a tree:

1. **First decide when to plant your tree.**
2. **Now decide where to plant your tree.** You can plant your tree in your backyard with your family. Or you can ask your teacher if there is a place to plant it at school.
3. **Buy your tree.** For \$10 you can [join the National Arbor Day Foundation](#) and receive ten trees in the mail. Ask an adult to help you sign up and order your trees. You can also buy a tree from your local nursery (a place that grows trees and other plants). Ask a person who works at the nursery to help you choose a tree that will grow well in your area.
4. **Prepare your tree for planting.** If you ordered a tree through the mail, it will have bare roots. Unpack the tree and soak the roots in water for 3 to 6 hours. If you bought a tree at a nursery, ask someone there for planting instructions.
5. **Plant your tree.** Dig a hole that is just as deep as and about twice as wide as the roots. Place the tree in the hole and hold it upright while a friend fills the hole with dirt. Pack down the dirt. Give your tree plenty of water.
6. **Spread a layer of mulch** about two inches deep around your tree but not touching it. (You can buy mulch at a nursery.) Mulch helps keep your tree from drying up.
7. **Water your tree often** over the next year and watch it grow!
8. **Think about it:**
  - ▶ Who did your project help?
  - ▶ What did you see and hear during the project?

- ▶ How did this project make you feel?
- ▶ What did you learn that you did not know before?
- ▶ What new questions or ideas do you have?
- ▶ Is there anything you would do differently the next time?

9. **Celebrate!** Thank everyone who helped you.

10. **Keep helping.** There are plenty of other ways to help the environment. Get your classmates or your afterschool program to adopt a park to keep clean. You can go back every month and have a contest to see who can pick up the most trash in half an hour.

