

# Protecting Our Children's Future:

## A CARING FOR MOTHER EARTH CHECKLIST



Shade, M'Chigeeng First Nation



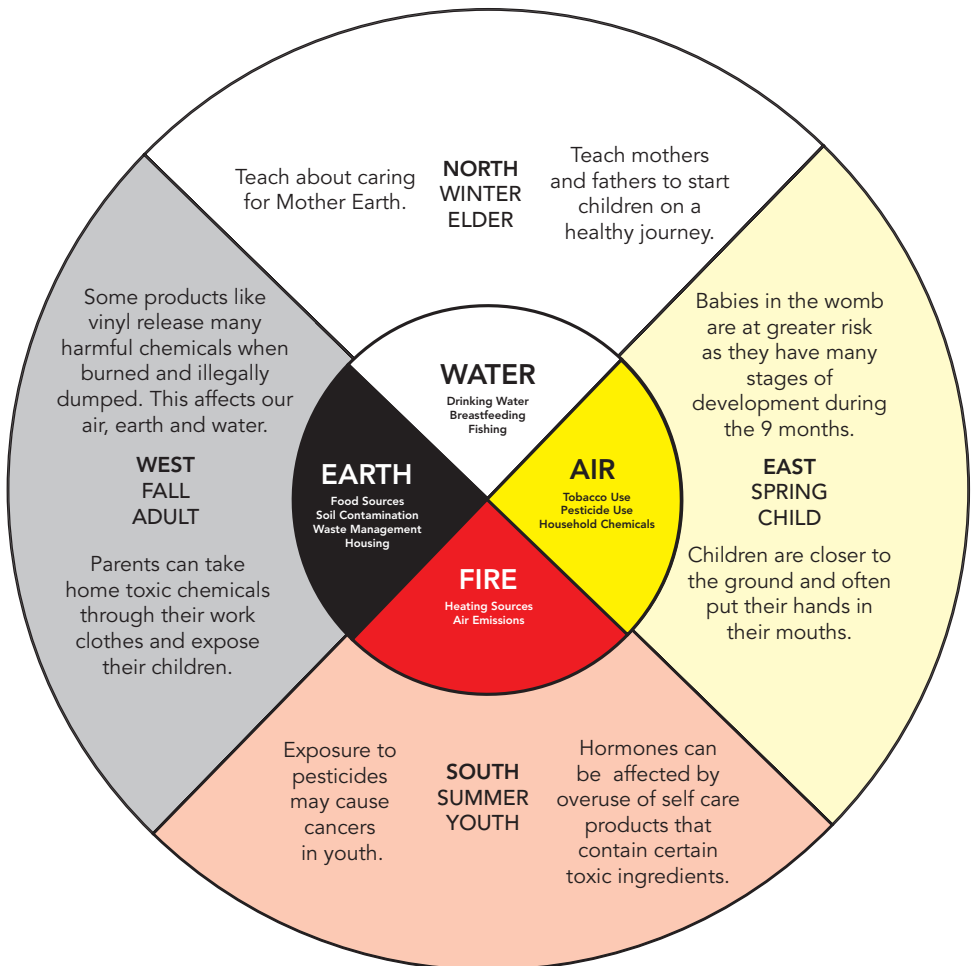
Union of Ontario Indians  
FASD Program



Thunder Bay District  
Health Unit

# LET'S HELP OUR KIDS HAVE A HEALTHIER START ON LIFE'S JOURNEY!

*Today's children are at greater risk of developing health problems than their parents or grandparents because they may have more exposures to contaminants in their lifetime.*



*Exposure to one or more chemicals before the baby is born or in childhood can affect a person throughout the life cycle.*

Adapted from: PEI Environmental Health Co-operative, 2010  
Through the Eyes of a Child, 2010, Union of Ontario Indians

# 7 GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Seven Grandfathers Niizhwaaswi Mishoomag

### WISDOM/NBWAAKAAWIN

- Wisdom knows the difference between good and bad, and the truth of our actions.
- Wisdom is the lesson we gain through life experiences. It is about learning from our mistakes. Wisdom understands the negative and positive aspects of all our actions on others and the environment.

### LOVE/ZAAGIDWIN

- Unconditional love is given freely and you cannot put conditions on it or your love is not true.
- Love is not abusing yourself, others, or the environment (all of creation). It is about considering the impact of our actions on the next seven generations.

### RESPECT/MNAADENDMOWIN

- Respect everyone, all humans and all of creation. If we cannot show respect we cannot expect respect to be given back to us.
- Respect is about being careful that our actions do not have a negative impact on others and the environment.

### BRAVERY/AAKDEHEWIN

- To be brave is to do something right even if it is difficult and we know it might cause us pain.
- One of life's many challenges is being brave enough to take responsibility for our actions and the impact they may have on others and the environment.

### HONESTY/GWEKWAADZIWIN

- Honesty is about being honest in our actions and in our hearts.
- Honesty is about admitting to ourselves that what we do may hurt the environment, and accept that we need to change.

### HUMILITY/DBAADENDIZWIN

- Humility is recognizing that we are all equal and we share Mother Earth with all living things.
- Humility is realizing that we need to think beyond ourselves. We need to consider how our actions may affect the environment for all living things and for the next seven generations.

### TRUTH/DEBWEWIN

- To learn truth, to live with truth, to walk with truth, to speak truth.
- Truth is about living by these Seven Grandfather Teachings. Truth is about speaking out against the damage being done to the environment.

Adapted from FASD and the Seven Grandfather Teachings, created by Mary Elliot for the North Shore Tribal Council

			Open windows in the garage and in the house when cleaning, vacuuming, making crafts and working with solvents.
			Limit the use of solvents indoors.
			Remove old and frayed carpets.
			Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
			Choose environmentally-friendly cleaners such as vinegar, baking soda and lemon juice.
			Use natural fragrances such as flowers and spices or open windows to freshen indoor air rather than buying deodorizers, air fresheners and scented candles.
			Use low or no volatile organic compound (VOC) paint instead of oil-based paint.
			Reduce the use of scented personal care products such as hairsprays, nail polish, shampoos and perfumes.



			If you find mould in your house, follow proper steps to remove. Visit <a href="http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca">www.hc-sc.gc.ca</a> and search: Mould and Your Health.
			Remove mouldy items from the house.
			Use the fan (for at least 20 min.) or open a window when having a bath/shower.
			Dust regularly with a damp cloth to prevent dust build-up especially around electronics such as computers and televisions.
			Purchase furniture and building materials made from VOC (volatile organic compound) free materials.
			Limit the use of vinyl products such as vinyl tablecloths and shower curtains. Always air out vinyl products outside before using to "off gas."
			Keep pets out of the bedroom. Pet hair and dander irritate the lungs and respiratory tract.

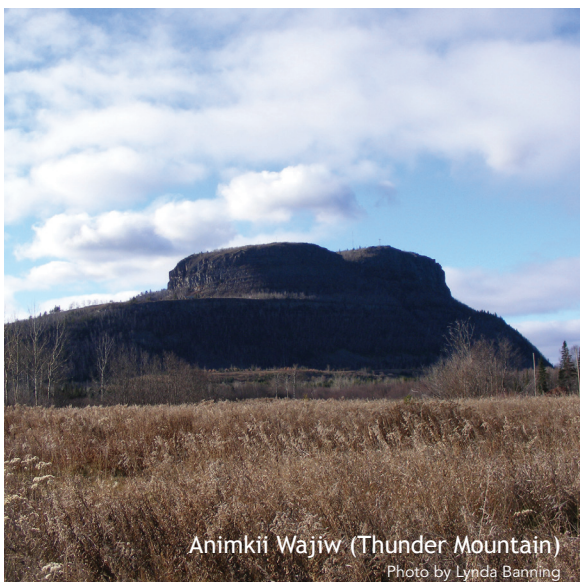


I am doing    I plan to do    N/A    **Air**

			Buy clothes that don't need to be dry cleaned.
			Remove dryer lint from dryer using gloves especially if you are pregnant.
			Stop using deodorizers or air fresheners in your vehicle.
			Empty containers of standing water to limit areas where mosquitoes breed.
			Cover exposed foam from couches and other furniture with material like a pillow case.



			Turn down the thermostat by a couple of degrees in the winter when not at home.
			Drive a smaller vehicle instead of a larger vehicle.
			Take a bus, bike, walk or car pool instead of driving whenever possible.
			Drive the speed limit.
			Do not idle your car.
			Bring your vehicle for tune-ups on a regular basis.
			Wear a shirt, a hat, and put sunscreen on children over 6 months old. Seek shade between 11 am to 4 pm.
			Use a push mower instead of a gas or electric lawn mower.



			Find out about education programs that provide information about how to safely heat your home (like cleaning and inspection, venting and how to properly work a woodstove and fireplace).
			Stay indoors on smoky, forest fire days. Watch for air quality notices.
			Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
			Plant trees in your yard for shade.
			Ask smokers to smoke outside and not in the house.
			Choose natural tobacco for ceremonies instead of industry tobacco products.



			Pack a litter-free lunch for work and school using containers.
			Consider buying second-hand clothes or donating your used clothes to a local charity.
			Throw out any plastic that is chipped, scratched or cracked.
			Dispose of hazardous household waste at a hazardous waste site. Do not pour waste like motor oil down household drains and do not dispose of in backyards.
			Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs. Do not break or put them in the garbage as they contain small amounts of mercury.
			Use cloth diapers more often instead of disposable diapers.
			When working with harmful chemicals, wash your hands, take a shower and wash your work clothes separately.
			Avoid buying soft vinyl toys because small children should not chew on these.
			Wear and tear of old leaded paint can contaminate the soil around your home near the drip line and porch. Children should not play in this soil. Avoid planting a garden in this area.
			Replace plastic shopping bags with reusable bags and keep some handy in the car.
			Remove garbage from your home and clean garbage cans to avoid pests.
			Protect children from exposed toxic materials in the house including paint chips, scrap building materials and insulation.

*"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."* Indian Proverb

			Avoid the use of pesticides on your lawn and in your home.
			Use reusable gift bags and newspaper instead of wrapping paper.
			Subscribe to Health Canada's Consumer Product recall website (see back page for website).
			Avoid purchasing cheap jewelry and toys: if you can draw a gray line on paper with them they may contain lead.
			Make your own baby food.
			Peel and wash fruits and veggies well with water.
			When reheating foods in the microwave, don't use plastic.
			Prepare traditional foods that include berries, vegetables and wild meat rather than buying ready-to-eat store bought processed food high in salt, sugar and preservatives. Cut away fat from wild meat. Choose to bake foods rather than fry.



			Find out about education programs in your community that offer information about traditional diets including hunting, fishing harvesting and preserving of wild meats, vegetables and plants.
			Do not harvest medicines or wild edibles like blueberries near hydro lines, where pesticides may have been used.
			Plant hardy, low-maintenance perennials and shrubs. They help stabilize the soil.
			Plant an extra row in your garden and donate your produce to the local food programs.
			Buy only non-toxic play equipment. Throw away chipped, scratched or worn out toys.
			Remove outdoor shoes at the door to avoid tracking dirt indoors .
			Wash your hands after you come back into the house.
			Pick up pet droppings. Try making your own pet waste digester. Find out how at <a href="http://ecosuperior.org">ecosuperior.org</a> .



			Wear gloves when gardening.
			Visit farmers' markets to purchase local foods.
			Recycle as much as you can using curbside recycling or drop off at recycling depots whenever possible. If your community does not have recycling days, host a recycling event.
			Make arrangements to bring recycled materials on your next visit to the city.
			Host waste disposal site days like solvent and battery drop off days.
			Make your own composter. Find out how at <a href="http://www.ecosuperior.org">www.ecosuperior.org</a> .
			Make a bear-proof garbage bin and avoid burning of garbage.
			Reduce consumption of organ meats such as liver and kidneys which tend to store contaminants.
			Reduce plastic. Bring your own supplies to gatherings.



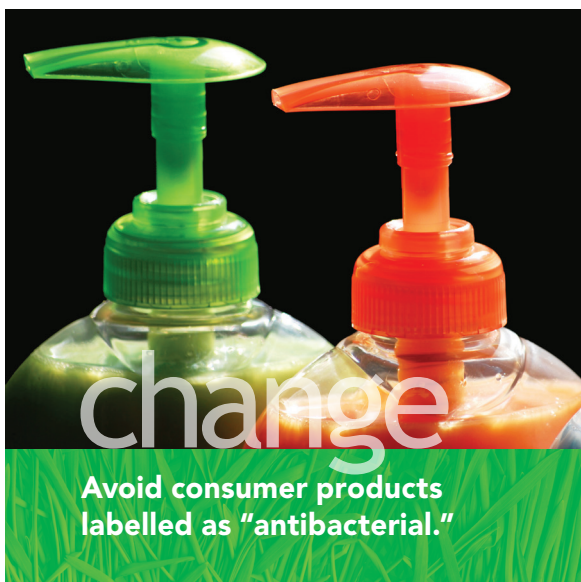
			No alcohol during pregnancy.
			Breastfeed your baby.
			Make your own personal care products such as baby lotion and milk bath.
			Contact your local pharmacy or First Nation Health Centre to dispose of old over-the-counter and prescription medicine.

*"First Nations believe that there are four waters: the forever flowing waters that flow from the heavens who protect and cleanse our Mother, the Earth; the rivers and streams that are her life blood, the water that flows within the trees and provides us with medicine and the waters that flow within us that also nurture and protect our unborn."* Laurie McLeod-Shabogesic



I am doing    I plan to do    N/A    **Water**

			Avoid products labeled as "antibacterial."
			Use fragrance free laundry detergent.
			Flush your toilet or run water from the tap for a few minutes in the morning especially if you have an older home as it may have lead pipes.
			Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible.
			Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes.
			Take showers more often than baths as they use less water.
			Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
			Use a covered container to capture rain water for flowers and gardens.
			Use personal water containers made of stainless steel instead of buying plastic water bottles for day-to-day use.



## Web Links

Anishinabek Ontario Fisheries Resource Centre  
[aofrc.org](http://aofrc.org)

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment  
[healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

Health Canada Consumer Product Recalls  
[hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/advisories-avis/index-eng.php](http://hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/advisories-avis/index-eng.php)

Ministry of the Environment  
[ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/index.html](http://ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/index.html)

Thunder Bay District Health Unit - Children's Environmental Health  
[tbdhu.com/hbhf/ceh](http://tbdhu.com/hbhf/ceh)

Union of Ontario Indians Anishinabek Health Secretariat  
[anishinabek.ca](http://anishinabek.ca)



Natalia, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve

## DISCLAIMER

Information in this checklist was adapted with permission from "Through the Eyes of a Child": First Nation Children's Environmental Health, Union of Ontario Indians Anishinabek Health Secretariat, 2009 and Home Environment Checklist, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, 2006



Ryan J. MacLaurin (1977-2013)  
Photo used with permission of his family

*"The Sleeping Giant, also known as Nanabijou, the Spirit of the Deep Sea Water turned to stone when the existence of silver (at base of the mountain/Giant's feet) was revealed to the white man. Just like Nanabijou protects its silver treasure, we need to protect children, our greatest treasure, from environmental contaminants." Lyne Soramaki*

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Our checklist can be downloaded at:

[http://www.anishinabek.ca/download/FN\\_Enviro\\_Checklistfinalnov30book.pdf](http://www.anishinabek.ca/download/FN_Enviro_Checklistfinalnov30book.pdf)

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