

Exploring

children's health and wellness

 **Capital District
Child Care Council** *a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children*

A Fresh Approach to Spring Cleaning

Approach "Spring Cleaning" with a fresher, eco-friendly method this year to help with the disposal of items that may harm children and help preserve our planet for future generations.

Some local businesses will dispose of and recycle certain items. Here are some tips for disposing of those "hard to throw out" items:

- Compact fluorescent bulbs can now be returned, free of charge, to Home Depot, Aubuchon's Hardware and Lowe's. Fluorescent lighting contains mercury. Exposure to mercury may cause learning disabilities in children.
- Old gas cylinders used on gas grills can be returned to Aubuchon's Hardware or Tri-County Propane in Rotterdam for a fee (check your local listings). Please do not dispose of these tanks in weekly trash pick ups. Improper disposal could cause explosions and fire.
- Left over latex paint may be donated to a non-for profit agency. You must have ½ a gallon or more to donate. You may call ECOS at 370-4125 for a referral.

More tips on paint disposal:

- * Just add kitty litter to the paint until it is fully absorbed. Let it dry outside in a safe area, under cover. When it is dry remove the dry paint place into a plastic bag and dispose in your trash.
- * If you have empty paint cans with a thin layer of paint you may recycle these cans. Remove the lid and let the can dry out. These may be placed in with your recyclable trash.
- * When you have many cans of paint, aerosol cans, household cleaners, lawn and garden chemicals, solvents and automotive fluids to dispose of contact the County Household Hazardous Waste Program at 1-800-494-2273. These are accepted by the Household Hazardous Waste Program (HHW).

For more information visit
<http://www.schenectadycounty.com/recycling>
www.epa.gov/nps

Though many of these products are a necessity of life, we can still reduce the use of hazardous products or at least keep their use to a minimum. Here are some helpful hints to help with tough chores without damaging the environment.

- General cleaning- try vinegar or lemon juice diluted with water.
- Glass cleaner-wipe with newspaper. Use 1/4 cup vinegar in 3 cups of water. Place in spray bottle.
- Ant repellent- sprinkle red chili pepper, paprika or peppermint. Chalk or weather strip entry areas.
- Insect repellent-use chamomile tea as a lotion. Burn citronella candles or punk incense.
- Toilet bowl cleaner-flat cola for 1 hour, brush and flush
- Laundry/stain remover-use baking soda on stains and add dry for general laundry enhancer. Make a paste with water and baking soda and brush onto stain. Rub chalk on to grease stains.
- For perspiration stains apply salt water or white vinegar onto stains and rub.
- Grout cleaner- use a toothbrush toothpaste, denture cleaner or baking soda with 1 part water.

Water supply is also in danger of becoming polluted. Here are a few hints for keeping our water clean:

- Use fertilizers sparingly always sweep up driveways and sidewalks.
- Never dump anything down storm drains.
- Take your car to the car-wash. Avoid washing in your driveway.
- Check your cars for leaks of antifreeze or oil.
- Pick up after your pets.
- Have your septic tank pumped and system inspected regularly.

Remember any chemical may have a harmful effect on our children. Some results may not be seen for years. Keeping a clean safe environment for our children should be everyone's priority. Start by using safe products and the results will be rewarding for you and the children you care for.