

Promoting pro-environmental behavior in children

29.04.2024 | Most studies on environmental behavior target adults. However, an article in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, led by an international team from UNIL*, suggests the importance of focusing on pro-environmental behavior in children from an early age.



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Obstacle to change among adults

Research carried out by this team reminds that adults often struggle to adopt eco-friendly habits due to deeply ingrained behaviors. Despite being aware of the consequences of overconsumption, adults are more inclined to maintain their comfort levels rather than reduce consumption. Past research has long identified habits, ideologies, and investments as key factors hindering behavior change among adults.

Children, tomorrow's key players

In contrast, children exhibit greater openness to initiatives promoting pro-environmental behavior. The research team examined various interventions targeting youth to determine their long-term effectiveness. Fabrizio Butera, a Professor at UNIL's Institute of Psychology,

highlights the impact of environmental education and social influence, alongside emerging strategies like eco-schools and interventions based on several theory-based processes.

The findings indicate that interventions with children yield positive outcomes for their environmental behavior. This underscores the importance of tailoring initiatives specifically for children. However, the effectiveness of these interventions diminishes with age, emphasizing the need for early intervention. Furthermore, the article suggests future research should focus on designing interventions that emphasize observable behaviors. The research team highlights the importance of methodological diversity, particularly in environmental education research, where field and laboratory observations are currently lacking. Additionally, there's a call for more research on group dynamics, which can foster a sense of efficacy and usefulness through collective action.

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Full article:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272494424000689?via%3Dihub>