

# Big families can be green, too

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One of the most "original" comments that the internet trolls leave me are love notes about how my extremely large family of six is ruining the world.

(Please also note that I am being sarcastic here, as I do not think having four children really does place me in an extreme parenting edition of life.)

Here's a recent gem on an article I wrote about [being judged in a restaurant for eating out with my three young children](#) and very pregnant belly: "CB; perhaps what you should do is close your legs and stop being a breeder. The world is severely overpopulated. Take your crotch nuggets somewhere else. No one wants them around."

While I will give points for the originality of being able to use the term "crotch nuggets" in a sentence, I am a little tired of the argument that families with more than 2.5 children are ruining the world. In fact, I happen to think that having a large family can be more eco-friendly than many would care to admit.

For starters, large families reign supreme in the realm of reducing, reusing and recycling. My current 4-month-old daughter is wearing a wardrobe almost entirely made up of outfits that her two older sisters wore. Are they a bit faded? Yes. Does she spend the majority of her days at home with me where no one can see her, let alone care if her outfit looks a bit dingy? Um, yes.

"We don't buy many new clothes and all our hand me downs are used within an inch of their lives," comments Meagan Francis, [matriarch of a brood of five kids](#)

Large families generally by their nature of having many mouths to feed are also quick to look for easy ways to save money — which usually translates into making eco-friendly decisions, like getting vehicles that have great gas mileage, cooking at home, packing lunches or avoiding disposable products. Like my family, Meagan has pretty much banned using paper products in her home on a regular basis. "We use reusable materials whenever possible," she says. "Towels instead of paper towels most of the time and we pack lunches." With four kids in the house, I've found it's just not practical to rely on paper towels. For instance, the amount of spills I go through on a regular basis would render me (and an entire) forest pretty broke.

Anne Dziekonska, who runs a [photography business with her husband](#), grew up in a family of sixteen and is adamant about the value of eco-friendly decisions that she learned in a clan of that size. At a very early age she learned to make smart household choices, like always turning off lights when leaving a room, pitching in with the family garden, composting and stocking up on grocery store sales. And while such values can be taught in any size family, Anne does believe that the sheer volume of people in their family made those lessons not only

necessary, but reinforced them as a lifestyle that carried on into adulthood. "I learned so much about efficiency and how to use things in moderation," Anne notes. "Waste not, want not is oh-so-true."

Of course, I could go on and on about all the ways that big families can be green, too, but the bottom line is that it's silly to argue that people shouldn't have more children because it's not kind to the environment. A single person can wreak as much damage to the world as the entire Duggar clan, so if we're all so worried about how kids are ruining the world, maybe we need to remember that those kids are an investment in the future and instead take a closer look at our own carbon footprints.