

154

That's the number of countries that participated in Earth Hour last year—an annual global movement where, for one hour, people turn off all their lights to highlight the importance of environmental issues. This year, Earth Hour 2014 will take place on March 29 at 8:30 p.m., in each time zone. To find out how you can get involved, visit earthhour.org.

A car seat that gets the **green light**

Recycling a car seat can be tough—safety restrictions prevent you from passing it off to another parent in need, and breaking the whole thing down into recyclable parts isn't exactly effortless. Enter Clek car seats. The company has a recycling program that allows you to pack up your old seat once you no longer need it and send it straight to Clek to recycle. They even provide you with store credit to make up for the cost of shipping, which you can use on booster seats or other accessories. Also great? Their fabrics are free of bromine and chlorine-based flame-retardants. For more info, go to clekinc.com. —Dana Wilkosz



better beauty buys

Scan the bar code of any cosmetic and find out how safe it is (or isn't) with the Environmental Working Group's new Skin Deep app. Products are rated on a 1 to 10 scale and broken down into three categories—low, moderate, and high hazard—so you can see exactly what's in your mascara while you're shopping. "EWG is all about game-changing research, and this app lets you take that research with you on-the-go to help protect your health and the environment," says Heather White, executive director at EWG. (For iPad, iPhone, Android, *free*) —Samantha Mellone

BUILD AN ECO-FRIENDLY FIRE

In the dead of winter nothing sounds better than curling up with the family next to a freshly-lit fire, but when it comes to energy conservation and fume exposure, it's not exactly eco. So what's a KIWI parent to do? Try out these tips to make your hearth a little greener, from John Crouch, director of public affairs at the nonprofit Hearth, Patio & Barbeque Association.

Choose the right kind of wood. Burning wet wood can waste lots of energy, since the water contained within the logs will boil as they burn, releasing steam—which actually lessens the strength of the fire. Prevent it by buying wood that's seasoned (a drying process that ensures the moisture content of the wood is below 30 percent) and has an even color, without any green. If you store your wood outside, be sure to keep it a foot off the ground, with the top covered with a tarp but the sides open so air can circulate.

Install glass doors. All fireplaces have vents that can be closed when the hearth isn't in use—but there can still be drafts from the chimney. To avoid a higher heating bill, try adding glass doors to the front of your fireplace. They're easy to install and come in a variety of options that fit different budgets.

Opt for regular maintenance. The most important thing you can do to have a safe fireplace is to ensure it's exhausting properly, with smoke going up and out of the chimney. Crouch recommends scheduling an appointment with a certified chimney sweep who can make sure everything is functioning as it should be. To find one, visit the Chimney Safety Institute of America at csia.org. —S.M.