Today EPA is announcing Energy Star specifications for televisions. Effective November 1, 2006, TV that carry the Energy Star label will be up to 30 percent more efficient than conventional models and will save money while they are on and when they are off. The new modifications are expected to prevent greenhouse gas emissions while offering U.S. Consumers the very best in terms of feature-rich, high-quality TVs.

“Energy Star's new specifications for televisions are turning the channel on energy guzzling sets - making them go the way of rabbit-ears and the black and white TV,” said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

After the new specification goes into effect, if all TVs sold in the United States meet the Energy Star requirements, the savings in energy costs will grow to about $1 billion annually and greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by the equivalent of about 1 million cars.

According to recent market research, U.S. shipments of TVs will top 36 million units in 2008. These TVs will typically be larger, in use more hours a day, and offer more vibrant pictures and other great features than their predecessors. However, these enhancements can come with a hefty energy price tag.

TVs first earned the Energy Star label in 1998 and ever since, TV manufacturers and EPA have worked together on efficiency improvements. The United States now has more than 275 million TVs in use; they consume over 50 billion kWk per year.

Energy Star was introduced by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Today, the Energy Star label can be found on more than 50 different kinds of products.
as well as new homes and buildings. Products that have earned the Energy Star designation prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the U.S. Government. In 2006 alone, Energy Star helped Americans save about $14 billion on their energy bills while doing their part to protect our environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 25 million vehicles. Visit: http://www.energystar.gov/pdtv

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**Does your teen understand illegal downloading?**

Parents have understood for millennia that they must teach their kids like honesty and that you cannot just walk into a store and take stuff. Modern parenting includes preparing kids for honesty in the digital age.

Microsoft released results from an online survey showing that teens are less likely to illegally download or share content from the Internet when they understand the laws protecting intellectual property. However (and here's the heads-up for parents and teachers), 49% of those surveyed said they did not understand the rules for downloading music, movies, images, literature and software. Only 11% of teens surveyed said they "understood the rules very well."

Further, while an overwhelming majority (90%) said that punishment was due for stealing in the off-line world, fewer than half saw the need for punishment if copyrighted material was stolen online without paying for it or getting its owner's permission for use. As more and more of our world goes digital, we need to teach our kids that stealing is stealing, on or off the web. Visit mediawise.org for tips on parenting in the media age.

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**Trying to impress others?**

Children may sometimes tell lies to impress friends or family members. These types of lies are often told in an after-the-fact situation when a child wishes he had performed better in a game than he did.

He/she may report a story based more on what he/she wishes his/her skill level had been than on what actually happened. In such reporting, he/she is more preoccupied with who he/she wants to be than with who he/she really is.

What to do? The child who lies to impress others has somehow learned that, in order to be considered a worthwhile person, he/she must excel in whatever he does. Rather than focus on the lying behavior, it is more important to determine why the child feels such pressure to excel.

Without intending to, parents and other adults may sometimes convey the message in subtle, unconscious ways that winning is everything and that good effort, without success, counts for nothing.

To help a child overcome this pressure and thereby overcome this type of lying – parents should focus on the child's own good qualities without making comparisons with others.

Helping a child improve the basic skills he/she wants to develop if done in a fun-filled manner will also help him/her abandon lying as a way of trying to impress others.
Don't Let Cleaning Go to the Dogs

Having a dog or cat in the household calls for more vigilant cleaning, particularly if there are family members who suffer from asthma or allergies.

- **Vacuum regularly.** If you pet sheds heavily, or if a family member is highly allergic, you may need to vacuum as often as once a day.

- **Use an upright vacuum or a canister style with a power nozzle.** They pick up two to six times as much dust from a rug as canisters without a power nozzle.

- **A synthetic carpet with a stain-resistant finish is a better choice than one with wool or cotton fibers.**

- **If your pet has a favorite chair or corner of the sofa, cover the chair/sofa with a washable blanket or throw.** Launder the blanket/throw frequently. Have multiple covers so that one is available while the other is in the wash.

- **Use a fabric refresher** to keep your sofa or loveseat smelling fresh after Fido leaves the room.

- **A comfy pet bed may help cut down on “pet napping” on the furniture.**

- **Declare some areas off-limits to your pet** – particularly the bedrooms of those who suffer from allergies or asthma.

- **Brush your cat or dog** frequently. If possible, do it outside, away from those with allergies. When you're finished, wash your hands with soap and warm water.

Store cleaning products in a locked cabinet or out of reach of curious pets, cautions Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at the Soap and Detergent Association. Don't leave any type of cleaning liquid out where pets might be tempted to take a drink. As a kindness to your pet, send him to another part of the house while you're cleaning. Not only is it safer, but the activity and the noise of the vacuum can upset your best friend.

### Physical Outdoor Environment

The physical outdoor environment provides a special stage for action and can stimulate children's play, learning and physical activity. The environment includes both the context of the outdoors play area and how the child care building and play space sit on the lot. Outdoor spaces, however, must be designed in a way that allows children to take safe risks while testing their emerging abilities. A safe, well-planned environment provides opportunities for children to seek new challenges as they master old ones.

Natural play spaces can stimulate children's imaginations and engage their sense of curiosity as they explore their physical surroundings and learn in ways beyond what they can experience indoors.

Often child care program are located in space that was designed neither for a child care program nor for outdoor learning. Certainly some barriers exist that prohibit teachers from making major changes, but envisioning an evolution of the space is critical. Change cannot occur overnight, but certainly incremental change can be
incorporated into a long-range plan.

A few factors should be considered when evaluating the space for the outdoor learning areas. Consider these questions:

- Is the outdoor space well-integrated with the building and other areas such as the parking and entrance ways?
- Is there a sense of connection and flow from parking to the building entrance? And is there a flow from the exit to the play area?
- What are the children's traffic patterns in the play year? Do the circulation pathways make sense?
- Are areas near the facility buffered with fencing or landscaping to provide safety and toward off air pollution (such as dust, fumes)?
- Does the center look welcoming and child-centered when one approaches?
- Is there adequate drainage in the play areas so that rain does not cause soil erosion or wash away mulch?
- Is there a long-range plan for making major adjustments, such as changing the orientation of the play redrawing the pathways for walkers and predators?
- Does the area have an overall warm, natural feel?
- Does the placement of manufactured play equipment overwhelm and focus play in only one location?

Interactions

Children learn social skills interacting with other children, with adults and even with objects and natural materials found in the environment. The environment can serve a valuable purpose when it is set up to expose children to opportunities to explore, question, and develop theories about how things work. Negotiation, language and cooperation are all skills that develop through diverse opportunities. Adults who are overly intrusive or not involved at all with children are not able to notice what children want to explore and learn about in their surroundings.

Consider in assuring your play space provides opportunities for interactions:

- Is the site safe and scaled to a child's size?
- Is outdoor time maximized through an intentional, well-planned approach to arranging the space and using the time?
- Does the program create a positive tone supporting a child's natural curiosity in playing outdoors?
- Are there opportunities for children to encounter each other (on a beach, along a pathway intersection, in a play store or on a puppet stage)?
- Do children have the freedom to select safe materials to use outdoors to build upon their natural sense of exploration?
- Does this outdoor space offer enough choices for children?
- Are there adult-sized places for parents and other visitors to interact with children?
Do child and adult interactions seem natural and relaxed, allowing for more creative approaches to learning and problem solving?

Are adults following the lead of the child?

Visit: http://www.naturalearning.org

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**Recent Facts About Flax**

Flax—it's not just for cattle or cloth anymore. Though flax enjoys a variety of uses, it has recently received accolades for the beneficial fatty acids and fiber it offers the human diet.

Flax is gluten-free and can be consumed by individuals who have gluten intolerance. It has minimal carbohydrate content and therefore can be easily incorporated into a low carbohydrate diet. Most notably, flax is the richest source of alpha linolenic acid (ALA) in foods typically eaten by Americans. ALA is the essential omega-3 fatty acid (essential because our bodies require it, but cannot make it on their own). One tablespoon of ground flaxseed provides the U.S Adequate Intake of ALA for anyone. So how much do you need? The A.I is 1.6g for an adult male, 1.1g for women (1.4g for pregnant women, 1.3g for lactating women), 0.9g children and 0.7g young children (1-3 years old). One to two tablespoons is considered a serving of ground flaxseed and 1 tablespoon provides: 1.8g ALA, 2.2g dietary fiber, 3.3g total fat and 36 calories.

Ongoing flax research examines the health benefits as they relate to many chronic diseases and conditions. For example, the protective effect of a substance in flax know as lignan (a phytochemical with suspected anticancer and antioxidant properties) is being studied. It shows promise in the area of hormone-sensitive breast cancers. Lignan works by attaching to estrogen receptors in the breast and interfering with estrogen metabolism. There are some studies that suggest it can also be helpful in moderating the negative effects of menopause in post-menopausal women. Flax has the highest level of lignan found in any food.

There is evidence from clinical and epidemiologic studies that sudden cardiac death occurs less often in people who consume diets high in ALA. This may be due to the combined effect of ALA and fiber (mucilage gum) in lowering blood cholesterol. The protective effect of flax may have more to do with the fiber than ALA in reducing cholesterol. However, ALA does reduce inflammation in the blood vessels that exacerbate atherosclerosis. Several large-scale population studies have shown than individuals who consume ALA-rich diets have lower risks of CVD.

Other possible benefits of flax are currently being studied. It is known when healthy young adults consume flax, their blood glucose is lowered. Now studies are underway to determine effects of flax on blood glucose and insulin in individuals with type II diabetes.

Recent findings from animal studies and test tube studies with human colon cancer cells suggest that ALA in flax may be protective against colon cancer. It is also encouraging that the inflammatory response in some forms of arthritis, may be reduced by ALA and lignan in flax.

All the data are not in on the possible health benefits of flaxseed. However, a diet may include a serving of ground flaxseed meal along with a variety of foods selected from the Food Guide Pyramid.
It's also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, dietary fiber and plant lignans. Flax seed may help protect against coronary heart disease as well as breast and colon cancer.

The benefits don't stop here — there is a real fiber advantage too. Flax seed contains high quantities of both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber reduces blood cholesterol levels and insoluble fiber helps with regularity.

Use flax seed whole, or grind it at home in a coffee grinder, food processor or blender. Grinding ensures that all seeds are broken up, which provides the most nutritional benefit.

Flax seeds and other flax products can be purchased in health food stores. Flax seed has a pleasant nutty flavor. Use it in baked products and add some to breakfast cereal. Store whole flax seed at room temperature for up to a year, but ground flax should be refrigerated in an airtight, opaque container.

Try this recipe using ground flax seeds:

**Apple and Flax Pancakes**

1 1/4 cups flour  
1/3 cup ground flax seeds  
3 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
Dash of nutmeg  
2 eggs, separated, whites beaten stiffly  
1 1/4 cups low fat milk  
2 tablespoon canola oil  
1 cup pared and shredded apple

1. In a large bowl, combine flour, flax, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg.

2. In a medium bowl, lightly beat together egg yolks, milk and oil.

3. Add liquid ingredients to the dry, and stir until just combined.

4. Shred apple, add to batter; stir until just combined.

5. Fold in beaten egg whites.

6. Lightly spray griddle with cooking spray and preheat to medium heat.

7. Using a 1/3 cup measure, pour batter onto pan.

8. Cook pancakes until bubbles appear on surface, about 1 minute.

9. Turn over and brown other side. This is excellent for waffles too.
