

The Powerful People

Children are the people with the real power: the power to absorb information, the power to communicate it, and the power to act. They are the industrialists and homeowners of tomorrow. If we educate children today, they will act as adults tomorrow.



By Aoife Cannon
Education
Executive,
Irish Energy
Center, Ireland

Children often bring home their enthusiasm for a subject, educating parents and others in the process. The Irish Energy Centre finds that pupils' intelligence and exuberance can help to educate families as well as children about energy conservation.

The Centre runs an active education programme in schools across Ireland, teaching about sustainable energy and energy conservation. Children provide a very powerful communication channel, pass on what they have learnt in school to their parents and other adults. Moreover, today's students are the homeowners and industrialists of tomorrow.

The Centre provides user-friendly resources to allow teachers to bring energy issues into the classroom in a real way.

Publications include:

- Energy In Our Lives (booklet)
- Energy Resources in Ireland (booklet)
- Hey Everything's Working
- Energy Conservation and the Environment Resources Pack (folder)

Schools are also encouraged to log on to the Centre's website, which has a section dedicated to schools, with activities, projects, an art gallery, teachers' information, and more.

Exhibitions and workshops specifically aimed at schools are run each year. For last year's workshops, the Centre developed the "Energy Challenge", comprising a large floor game and six interactive exhibits. Both have proved extremely popular with all ages (See Box).

The Irish Energy Centre is responsible for the promotion and the development of a sustainable national energy economy. It is funded by the Irish government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and is partly financed by the European Union.

More information:

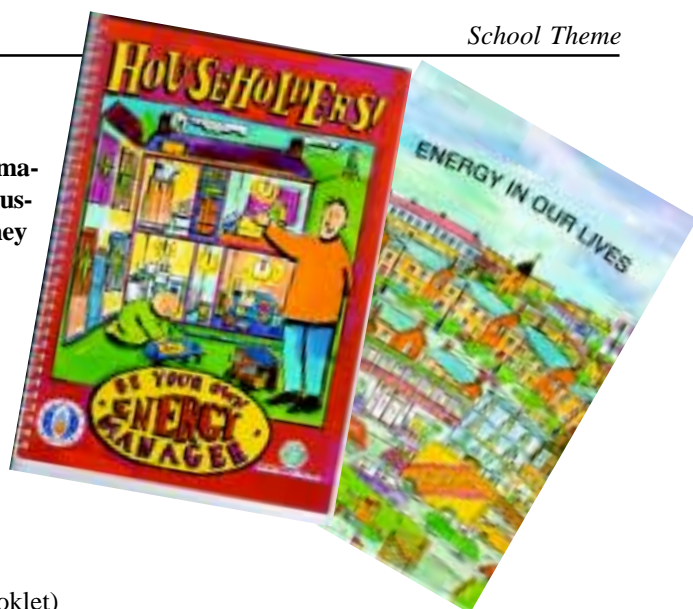
Aoife Cannon, Irish Energy Center,
Grasnevin, Dublin 9, Ireland.

Ph: +353 1 808 2093,

fax: + 353 1 837 2848,

e-mail: aoife.cannon@irish-energy.ie,

www.irish-energy.ie



"Who Wins the Game? - Coloured Balls on a Giant Floor Game in Ireland"

The object of the "Energy Challenge" game is to be the most energy-efficient by collecting as many energy tokens (coloured balls) as you can as you go around the board and by limiting the 'pieces' of energy that you lose. Whichever team has the most "energy" wins the game.

The dice is a large cube of foam. The question cards are large pieces of cardboard. Children of all ages enjoy the game. Questions can be chosen according to the age and ability of the group. Each group has its own colour (green, red, blue, or yellow) and has to select its energy balls from a large basket in the middle of the board.

Each team (1 to 4 students) rolls the dice and moves the corresponding number of spaces. One member of the group will have to stand on the space. The features of the space on which they land determine their next action.

For example: if they land on a '?', they have to pick up a card and answer a question. If they get the question right they gain an 'energy' token. If they lose, they have to give up a piece of energy. If they land on a 'not-so-energy-efficient space' (a picture of coal/peat fire, oil, tungsten light bulb, car) they have to miss a turn and have to go to the 'sin bin'. If they land on an 'energy-efficient space' (a picture of a bus, wind turbine, hydro, sun) they can continue playing. These spaces also allow the opportunity for discussion among all teams.

When students pass 'start' they get an energy token. Each corner has a task. The first corner is 'recharge batteries' and one cannot move forward until an even number is rolled on the dice. If the player lands on the second corner, which is inscribed with 'use some energy', the team has to use some of their own physical energy, e.g., by running on the spot, push ups, star jumps, etc. The third corner is when the town is having an energy shortage and the player has to give back one energy token.

