

<https://www.videoproject.org/the-climate-baby-dilemma.html>

Deciding whether to have a child is a deeply personal process. Deciding amid increasingly dire warnings for the planet makes it even more overwhelming. *The Climate Baby Dilemma* explores how the long-held goals of entire generations are being thrown into flux by a warming planet, as a rising number of young people express discomfort with having children due to the existential threat of climate change.

With the future promising to bring increasing instability, deep anxieties around parenting are entering climate conversations. The concerns are two-fold: What impacts does a new human have on an already overburdened planet, and how can one protect a child from the effects of climate change as reports tell us catastrophic changes could be just a decade away?

Featuring prominent science writer Dr. Britt Wray, the film seeks out activists, authors, and prospective parents considering the implications of introducing a new human into a rapidly changing climate. Some, such as Payton Mitchell and Emma Lim, are driving a youth climate initiative and have joined a "no child" pledge in an effort to compel leaders to action. On the other end, Indigenous activist and new mother Sarain Fox talks about how having a child resists the goals of colonialism and allows culture and language to live on, a crucial political activity for oppressed communities. The film also looks at how these movements are misunderstood and weaponized by climate deniers who would deem their efforts "population control" and "civilizational suicide." It also considers the effects that pre-traumatic stress and climate grief have on young people, with declining birth rates being one indicator of growing climate anxiety. Eventually, Wray herself faces the question of whether or not to start a family as she weighs that decision against the knowledge brought about by her work, and ultimately reconciles starting a family with climate action.

Though the realities are stark and distressing, *The Climate Baby Dilemma* compels viewers not to grieve prematurely, as the solutions to climate change already exist, and posits that the action of building and maintaining community may ultimately be the best means to combat eco-anxiety. Indeed, the best antidote to feeling powerless is activism, which can take many forms, including both refusing to have a child, as well as broadening the responsibilities of child-rearing to the extended family, and solidifying a commitment to climate action to help provide a healthier planet for future generations through the act of parenthood.

FEATURED IN THE FILM

- Dr. Britt Wray, Author of *Generation Dread* & Researcher, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford School of Medicine
- Payton Mitchell, Activist & Co-Founder, Climate Strike Canada
- Emma Lim, Activist & Founder, #NoFutureNoChildren
- Aliénor Rougeot, Climate Justice Activist & Co-Founder, Fridays for Future Toronto
- Dr. Jade Sasser, Associate Professor of Gender & Sexuality Studies, UC Riverside
- Sarain Fox, Anishinaabe Activist & Filmmaker
- Josephine Ferorelli and Meghan Kallman, Co-Founders of Conceivable Future
- Dr. Renée Lertzman, Climate Psychologist
- Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Activist & Executive Director, David Suzuki Foundation

FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT: "What I learned, emotionally, making this film was far more beautiful and hopeful than I expected, but it was also more deeply heartbreaking than I could have imagined. To be clear, no one featured in the film is interested in telling others to have kids or not, and this is not about population control. It is an urgent indicator of how young people are feeling.

By giving shape to something so personal, I hope the film encourages more people to have these conversations. It not only helps manage the emotions, but it personalizes the stakes of the crisis and plugs us into what will keep children safer: advancing justice-oriented approaches to climate action and the transition off fossil fuels.

Making the film has connected me more intentionally and deeply to that sense of love for the next generation, and it has also introduced new sets of questions involving what's now required to truly demonstrate that love to them. We are still learning about the true toll of the climate crisis. But the future is not doomed — it is still unwritten. Regardless of the level of climate devastation ahead, I've learned that we must now to find new tools as parents, as aunties and uncles, as godparents and community members to support the youth in our lives. It also means preparing for the day when a child looks you in the eye and asks if you did everything you possibly could."

— Victoria Lean | [Full Op-Ed for The Toronto Star](#)

Reviews and Festivals

AIRED ON PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTERS IN CANADA (CBC), JAPAN (NHK), FRANCE AND GERMANY (ARTE)

"*The Climate Baby Dilemma* takes a cue from Dr. Wray's writing about emotional responses to environmental change and looks at a generation of people as they confront the ethical choice to bring a child into a world with an uncertain future"

— **POV Magazine**

"[A] very effective and powerful way to open conversations about feelings that are either on people's minds directly or just beneath the surface[...]It helps remove stigma and fear and gives people a chance to find a way through their own choices as they navigate more intimate aspects of the climate crisis."

— **Climate Psychology Alliance**

"The Climate baby Dilemma is an important film to help young people navigate the complex personal decisions many are struggling with due to the climate crisis. Through intimate, relatable stories, the film powerfully conveys the question about parenting choices and offers educators a useful tool to help students explore this issue."

— **Climate Mental Health Network**

"The film covers ample ground in its runtime, incorporating nuanced perspectives on power and privilege and exploring how the history of different populations shapes conversations about 'climate babies.'"

— **Small Change Fund**

"The film covers an emotionally charged topic in a deeply respectful and honest way, and I'd highly recommend it as an educational tool for anyone looking to explore meaningful conversations about childbearing in a changing world."

— **Elizabeth Bechard, Senior Policy Analyst for Moms Clean Air Force and author of "Parenting in a Changing Climate"**

"As an educator, I see this as a meaningful film to show in schools, to spark guided conversations about a topic that is certainly on students' minds. It has the potential to help them realize they are not alone and that there are actions that they can take both as individuals and collectively."

— **Ira Udow, retired school principal and university lecturer**

"[Victoria Lean] approached the topic thoughtfully, inclusively, and with eyes wide open to the potential pitfalls of the various arguments... A really great unpacking of a very difficult topic."

— **The Environmental Urbanist**

WINNER

Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards, Silver Winner

US International Awards, Gold Camera, Social Issues

Yorkton Film Festival, Golden Sheaf for Best Documentary POV

Worldfest Houston, Gold, Long/Short Documentary