

REDUCE & REUSE & GARBAGE STORAGE

ECO-HEALTHY CHILD CARE® HELPS EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO BE AS HEALTHY, SAFE AND GREEN AS POSSIBLE BY REDUCING CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The life cycle of most manufactured products takes a big toll on the environment, whether it is due to pollution emitted by the manufacturing plant, extra energy consumption from non-renewable energy sources (coal or natural gas), or the unhealthy disposal of so much waste.

U.S. residents generate trash at an astonishing rate of four pounds per day per person, which translates to 600,000 tons per day or 210 million tons per year!

Electronic waste or “e-waste” (i.e., computers, televisions, VCRs, stereos, copiers, fax machines, cell phones) alone is estimated to be 20-25 million tons per year globally.

Trash contains many toxic substances that when disposed of can leach into landfill soil, migrate into groundwater, or be released into the air when incinerated.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH

The most important way to save valuable resources is to use as few as possible. **Establishing a national recycling program that requires manufacturers' responsibility** for the entire lifecycle (creation, distribution and disposal) of the products they create would aid greatly in reducing the U.S.' waste problem.

On an individual level, reducing our use of single-use items, can also assist in protecting the environment and our health.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Many manufacturing facilities, landfills and waste incinerators are disproportionately located in low-income communities and black and brown communities across the U.S.--exposing these populations to greater amounts of harmful chemicals.

WAYS TO REDUCE & REUSE

1. **Replace paper napkins and towels with cloth napkins and towels** that can be laundered and reused. Cloth hand towels and towels for cleaning may be used for “single-use” only and then laundered - to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
2. **Avoid using disposable plates, cups, and utensils/cutlery.** In addition to adding to waste, many also contain plastic additives that are harmful to human health.
3. **Opt for glass, pyrex or porcelain food and drink containers whenever possible.** Stainless steel drinking containers are ok for use with water.
4. **Buy/sell used items;** always check with the [Consumer Product Safety Commission website](#) for product recalls before purchasing used toys and equipment.
5. To avoid excess packaging, **buy staple food items in bulk** and use your own reusable storage containers (i.e., glass jars).
6. **Substitute throw-away batteries with rechargeable batteries.** Dispose of batteries properly by taking them to a hazardous waste facility; visit www.search.earth911.com to find a disposal site near you.
7. **Use reusable bags for shopping;** opt for cloth bags as they are sturdy and can be laundered.
8. **Purchase recycled paper products** such as toilet paper, paper towels, and printer paper. Make sure products are [free of harmful chemicals](#).

WAYS TO REDUCE & REUSE CONT.

1. **Start a worm bin or other composting system** using yard clippings, eggs shells and produce waste. Involve the children in your care so that they learn from an early age how and why to compost.
2. **Recycle glass, paper, cardboard, and aluminum** on a weekly basis.
3. **Create a recycling 'work station'** - where children learn how to differentiate the materials and sort products according to what they are made out of.
4. **Properly recycle all unwanted electronic products.**
5. **Support 'Manufacture Take-back Programs,'** where manufacturers or retailers accept used electronic products from their customers or visit www.search.earth911.com for information on how and where to recycle e-waste.
6. **Always recycle items containing mercury** (batteries, thermometers, thermostats, and compact fluorescent light bulbs or tubes) **by taking them to a hazardous waste facility.** Visit www.search.earth911.com to find a location near you.

GARBAGE STORAGE*

Unfortunately, not everything can be recycled, so proper garbage disposal is a must for any child care facility and home. **Keeping garbage areas clean and contained, and garbage containers sealed, can reduce germs, prevent pests, and minimize odors.**



* Adapted from [Integrated Pest Management: A Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs](#)

TIPS TO KEEP GARBAGE AREAS CLEAN

1. Take the **trash out daily.**
2. **Clean the inside and exterior** of empty trash cans.
3. Make sure indoor garbage containers have **tight-fitting lids and plastic linings.**
4. Keep outdoor garbage containers, including composting bins, **covered tightly.** Ensure the lids fit well to form a seal.
5. Ensure all garbage areas are **inaccessible to kids.**
6. Keep garbage storage (e.g. large dumpsters/cans collected by trucks) **at least 50 feet away** from the entryways of the child care facility or play yard.
7. Keep containers on **pest-proof pavement** such as concrete, which should be cleaned regularly.
8. **Promptly recycle** glass, cardboard, paper, and aluminum. Be sure to rinse and clean recyclables.

RESOURCES

Earth 911
<https://earth911.com/>

EPA's Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Web Page
<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>

NRDC's Blog: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Most of All, Reduce
<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/reduce-reuse-recycle-most-all-reduce>

Integrated Pest Management: A Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs
<https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/integrated-pest-management-toolkit-early-care-and-education-programs-0>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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