



Eco-Healthy Child Care®

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.



Recycling & Garbage Storage

Americans 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. E-waste can contain many toxic elements and agents. While the most important way to save valuable resources is to use as few as possible, recycling and using recycled products is the next best step.

Benefits of Recycling

- Conserves natural resources like trees, metal, oil, and minerals for future generations.
- Lessens habitat destruction as a result of deforestation. Recycling reduces need for raw materials and helps preserve our natural resources, such as our forests.
- Saves energy. A lot of energy is needed to make products from raw materials; recycling generally requires much less energy.
- Prevents emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, leading to cleaner: air, water, and soil, and a more stable climate.
- Reduces the need for landfills and incinerators.

17 Ways to Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

1. Recycle glass, paper, cardboard, aluminum and plastic on a weekly basis.
2. Create a recycling ‘work station’ - where children learn how to differentiate the materials and sort products according what they are made out of. Children are never too young to learn how to recycle materials.
3. Start a worm bin or other composting system using yard clippings, eggs shells and produce waste. Involve the children in your care.

4. 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.
5. Buy/sell used items, but always check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website for product recalls on used toys and equipment. Be on the lookout for choking hazards and items that may contain lead or flame retardants (in foam especially); ensure that used products are in good condition, with no flaking, cracking, tears or holes.
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. Reduce junk mail by canceling duplicates and asking to be removed from unwanted mailing lists.
9. Donate used books, toys, and computers (that are still in good condition) to your local library, school, hospital, or charity.
10. Replace paper napkins and towels with cloth napkins and towels. Cloth hand towels and towels for cleaning may be used for “single use” only - to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
11. Launder with fragrance-free, 3rd party “green” certified detergent using an energy- and water-efficient machine; line-dry whenever possible.
12. Purchase recycled paper products such as toilet paper, paper towels, and printer paper.
13. To avoid excess packaging, buy staple food items in bulk and use your own reusable storage con-

tainers (i.e., glass jars).

14. Borrow/purchase books, CDs, and DVDs from your local library or used bookstore. Or, opt for e-books.
15. Properly recycle all unwanted electronic products. 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.
16. Return unused drugs to a pharmacy; do not flush remaining portions down the toilet.
17. 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.

8 Ways to Keep Garbage areas Clean

Follow these suggestions to avoid pests and to minimize odors.

1. Take the trash out daily; don’t let it pile up!
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, plastic, paper and aluminum. Be sure to rinse and clean recyclables.

* Adapted from *Integrated Pest Management: A Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs* (http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/ipm/Curriculum_FINAL%2010.2010.pdf).

Recycling Resources

- EPA: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/rrr/index.htm
- Eco Tips
www.globalstewards.org/ecotips.htm
- Freecycle
www.freecycle.org
- The Story of Stuff
www.storyofstuff.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call: 202-543-4033, ext. 13

Email: ehcc@cehn.org

Visit: www.cehn.org/ehcc

Eco-Healthy Child Care® is a science-based, award-winning national program that seeks to improve the environmental health of children by partnering with child care professionals to eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards found in child care facilities.

Eco-Healthy Child Care®

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