

# 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

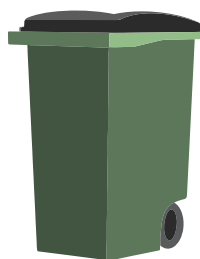
1. **Replace paper napkins and towels with cloth napkins and towels** that can be laundered and reused. Cloth hand towels and towels for cleaning may be used for "single-use" only and then laundered - to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
2. **Avoid using disposable plates, cups, and utensils/cutlery.** 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](https://www.cpsc.gov/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](http://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](http://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](http://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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