



**PLASTICS. TOO  
VALUABLE TO  
WASTE. RECYCLE.™**

# Recycling Information & Activities Toolkit

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## **Recycling and Healthy Living Tips**

### **1) Start with plastic bottles.**

Almost all recycling programs collect plastic bottles. (Here, you can point to the resin symbol on the bottom of a bottle and explain to students that this is how recyclers sort different types of plastics so they can process them and make them into new products.) A bottle is any container with a neck that is smaller than its base. These include:

- Milk jugs
- Water, soft drink, and juice bottles
- Bottles from shampoo, toiletries, laundry detergent and other household cleaners
- Salad dressing, cooking oil and condiment bottles
- Food jars, such as peanut butter and mayonnaise

Ask students to name some other plastic bottles in their homes.

### **2) Bring it to the bin.**

Many beverages are consumed away from home so it's important to bring empty bottles back to the recycle bin. Here's how: When you're out and about, place the cap back on and temporarily store the empty bottle in your backpack until you get home. This will prevent any liquid from leaking out until you can properly recycle the bottle.

The next time you think about throwing a recyclable plastic bottle in the trash, remember that recycled plastic bottles can be used to make new bottles, fleece jackets, tote bags, blankets, carpeting, T-shirts and the lumber for backyard decks, and that every bottle that goes into a bin and into these products is one less bottle in a landfill. A landfill is the place where the trash collectors take our trash to store it all in one big area - and landfills have A LOT of garbage so they don't need any recyclable plastic!

### **3) Pitch in beyond the kitchen.**

While many recyclable bottles come from the kitchen, don't forget to check the bathrooms and laundry room for shampoo and detergent bottles. (Here, you can ask students to name some other plastic bottles in their homes that they can remind family members to recycle. You might also ask students who in their home does most of the recycling and to come up with ways that they can help recycle more.)

#### **4) Don't forget food containers and lids.**

Different plastic containers can be made with different types of plastics. In addition to bottles, more neighborhoods are collecting and recycling plastic containers, such as yogurt cups, butter tubs, food containers and foam cups. But, keep in mind that mixing the wrong types of materials (even other plastics) can lower the quality of the recycled material. You can work with your parents to check on-line to find out what other types of materials your community does and does not collect.

#### **5) Plastic bags and plastic product wraps can be recycled, too.**

Here in California, large grocery stores and pharmacies now offer drop-off programs that allow shoppers to return their used plastic bags and product wraps to be recycled. In most stores, bag collection areas are located at the front entrance or near check out areas. Check with your grocer and other area retailers to see where bags are recycled in your community. Wherever plastic bags are recycled, you can also recycle: dry cleaning bags, newspaper bags, bread bags and wraps from paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, diapers and cases of beverages.

#### **6) Think outside the bag: Be creative with storage.**

Try storing bags in empty tissue or garbage-bags boxes until you are ready to reuse or recycle them. These items can fit neatly under your sink or in the bathroom vanity and will be easily accessible the next time you are looking for a new trashcan liner. Most boxes hold at least 50 bags and have a parachute hole for dispensing. Be sure to keep bags and wraps out of the reach of small children.

#### **7) Find new ways to use old bags. (Good info to share with parents)**

This is a great time to encourage the kids to come up with their own ideas on how to reuse plastic bags.

Use a bag more than once before throwing it away. Plastic bags' durability and water-resistance allow them to be reused in a variety of ways, such as:

- Wet umbrella cover - keep other items in your backpack dry when your umbrella is wet
- Doggie duty - take them on dog walks to collect and dispose of pet waste
- Hand protectors - place them over your hands to handle messes indoors and out
- Kitchen clean-up - place them under the cutting board for quick scrap removal

## **8) Play Outside.**

Talk to your students about the benefits of getting outside and playing games. Playing tag, riding a bike or playing basketball in the fresh air can help them burn calories. When they're at home, encourage them to help their parents walk the dog, do work in the yard, wash the car or just take a walk. These activities help children stay healthy and fit.

## **9) Why Water?**

Without water, our bodies would stop working properly. Water makes up more than half of your body weight and a person can't survive for more than a few days without it. Why? Your body has lots of important jobs and it needs water to do many of them. For instance, your blood, which contains a lot of water, carries oxygen to all the cells of your body. Without oxygen, those tiny cells would die and your body would stop working.

## **10) Drink up!**

Since water is so important, you might wonder if you're drinking enough. Kids should drink at least 2 glasses of water every day. Usually, kids like to drink something with meals and should definitely drink when they are thirsty. But when it's warm out or they're exercising, they should drink more. It's important to be sure to drink some extra water when you're out in warm weather, especially while playing sports or exercising.

## **11) Keep Your Water Bottle Handy.**

When your body doesn't have enough water, that's called being dehydrated. Dehydration also can keep you from being as fast and as sharp as you'd like to be. A bad case of dehydration can make you sick. So keep that water bottle handy when the weather warms up! Not only does water fight dehydration, but it's awfully refreshing and has no calories.

## Recycling Trivia Questions

**1) If you recycle your plastic water bottles they may be made into which of the following:**

a. fleece jackets; b. carpeting; c. t-shirts; d. blankets; e. all of the above.

The answer is **e. All of the above**, because remember that recycled plastic water bottles can be used to not only make new bottles but also fleece jackets, tote bags, blankets, carpeting and even T-shirts.

**2) Besides the kitchen, where might there be plastic bottles?**

a. The laundry room; b. the bathroom; c. the storage closet; d. all of the above.

The answer is **d. all of the above**. Remember, besides the plastic bottles you find in the kitchen, you can also recycle laundry detergent bottles, shampoo and conditioner bottles, liquid soap bottles and cleaning supply containers.

**3) How can you and your parents find out what can be recycled in your neighborhood?**

a. call a friend; b. ask my teacher; c. look on-line; d. none of these.

The answer is **c. look online**. While your friends and teacher can help, one of the best places to find out what is recycled in your neighborhood is to have your parents help you look on-line to see what is or is not collected in your community.

**4) Which of the following can be recycled?**

a. milk jugs; b. water, soft drink and juice bottles; c. salad dressing, cooking oil and condiment bottles. d. all of the above.

The answer is **d. all of the above**. Other bottles that can be recycled include: salad dressing, cooking oil and condiment bottles and food jars, such as peanut butter and mayonnaise.

Also, keep in mind that mixing the wrong types of materials (even other plastics) can lower the quality of the recycled material. So unless your community specifically asks for plastics other than bottles, please put only bottles into the recycling bin. You can work with your parents to check on-line to find out what other types of materials your community does and does not collect.

## Recycling Activities

The games described below can all be played with everyday household recyclable activities. They are designed for groups of up to 20 kids of all ages and require minimal set up and preparation. The objective is to keep moving, have fun, and remember to Reduce, Reuse, and RECYCLE!

### Activity 1: Recyclers vs. Landfill (Rolling Keep Away)

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#### Supplies:

- Cones
- Playground balls

#### Set up:

- Create a game square about 20 ft. x 20ft.
- Mark boundaries of square with cones.

#### Playing the Game:

- Divide the group into three even teams.
- Name two of the teams "Landfill" and the other "Recycler."
- The two "Landfill" teams will spread out along two opposing sides of the square.
- The Landfill teams try to roll (underhand only) the balls across the square to the other Landfill team.
- The Recycler team will try to stop the balls from crossing the square.
- When a ball is stopped the Recycler group, they will put it to the side because the item is "recycled" and can be used again for the next game.
- When someone stops a ball and puts it in the recycle pile, they have to shout out one thing that can be recycled before going back to try to stop the other balls.
- The game ends when all the balls are "recycled."
- Switch the groups and repeat until all groups are allowed to be the Recyclers.
- Repeat activity as long as time permits.

## Activity 2: Water Bottle Bowling Relay

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### Supplies:

- 4 medium empty 2 liter bottles
- 4 balls

### Set up:

- Fill the water bottles half full with water to weigh them down.
- Place the water bottles in a line spaced 4-5 feet apart
- Place the balls 10 feet in front of each of the water bottles

### Playing the Game:

- Divide the group into at least two teams with an even number of players on each team (i.e. four teams of five or three teams of four).
- Place one person from each team behind the water bottle.
- Have the rest of the team form a line behind the ball.
- The first person in line rolls the ball UNDERHAND toward the water bottle, trying to knock it down.
- Once the ball gets to the water bottle, the kid who rolled the ball runs down to the water bottle.
- The ball "thrower" and the ball "catcher" must tag hands behind the water bottle.
- The person who was standing behind the water bottle grabs the ball and takes it back to the next person in line and moves to the back of the line.
- The ball thrower sets the water bottle back up (if he or she knocked it down) and the next person in line bowls as soon as they get the ball back.
- Repeat until everyone has had a turn.
- Repeat activity as long as time permits.

## Activity 3: Recycling Relay

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### Supplies:

- Assorted clean empty recyclable items (five different types) that are all different sizes (i.e. 2 liter bottle, yogurt container, milk jug, small water bottle, empty egg carton).
- Collect four pieces of each item to create four piles of the same five items in each pile.
- Four cones/spot markers

### Set up:

- Create four piles containing five recyclable items in each pile.
- Place a cone 15-20 feet away from each pile.

### Playing the Game:

- Divide the group into four teams of equal numbers on each team. Teams are not to exceed 5 members.
- Have each team line up at a different cone.
- The first person from each team will run to the pile and pick out a recyclable item and bring it back to the group and hand it to the next person in line.
- The second person in line runs to the pile, carrying the first item and picks up a second item without putting the first item down.
- The second person in line carries both items back to the team and hands two items to the third person in line.
- The third person in line carries both items down to the pile and picks up a third item without dropping or putting down either of the first two items.
- The third person runs back to the team and hands all three items to the fourth person in line.
- The fourth person in line carries all three items down to the pile and picks up a fourth item (without putting down any of the three items) and runs back to the team.
- Repeat up to the fifth person in line who will pick up the last item, bring all five items back to the team and hand them off to the next person in line.
- The last person has to carry all five items back to the marker drop them all, then run back to the team.
- Repeat as time permits.

## Activity 4: Plastic Bag Juggling

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### Supplies:

- Approx. 21 plastic grocery bags (1 bag per kid, plus 1 extra plastic bag to recycle the materials when finished).

### Set Up:

- Cut the handles off each bag - place handles in extra bag for recycling.
- Cut down the seams on each side of the bag.
- Cut three strips out of the flat plastic sheets (place the rest of the bag in the extra bag for recycling later).
- Divide the plastic strips into stacks of 3 for each participant in the group.

### Playing the Game:

- Have all the kids start by gently tossing ONE plastic strip up in the air and catching it with their other hand.
  - *Note: the best way to "toss" the plastic is like a scarf where instead of throwing it, the kids lift them up and let go so they float slowly down. To "catch" instruct the kids to use their hand like a cat claw, facing down and grabbing the bag from the top rather than trying to catch it like a ball.*
- Once everyone is comfortable with tossing and catching one strip, add a second plastic strip so that they have one in each hand.
- As soon as they let go of one strip, they toss the second strip and catch it in the opposite hand then catch the second strip in the empty hand.
  - Tell them to make an X in the air with the plastic strips.
  - The pattern should go: toss, toss, catch, catch. It may be helpful to have the kids say "toss, toss, catch, catch" as they are doing it to understand the pattern.
- Practice with two strips until everyone is feeling comfortable. You may only have time to get up to one or two strips, but if the group wants to try three, go for it!
- Upper grade modifications: To juggle three, hold two strips in one hand and one strip in the other hand.
- Toss from the hand with 2 strips first and before it lands, toss the strip from the other hand.
- Catch the first strip and toss the third strip before catching the second strip.
  - Continue to have the kids visualize the X in the air and try to make the pattern with the 3 strips.
  - The pattern with 3 strips should be toss, toss, catch, toss, catch, toss, catch...

At the end of the day, collect all of the plastic strips in 1 plastic bag and tie it up for recycling so the strips don't fall out and blow away.

## Activity 5: Recycling Toss

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### Supplies:

- 4 clean, empty trash cans or boxes to serve as the recycling bin
- 12 clean, empty water bottles/yogurt containers/or other recyclable plastic containers that can be thrown a short distance. Can be all different types of containers.

### Set Up:

- Place the 4 trash cans or boxes in a straight line 4-5 feet apart.
- Make four piles of three plastic containers in each pile six feet in front of the recycling bins.

### Playing the Game:

- Divide the group into at least 2 teams with an even number of players on each team (i.e. 4 teams of 5 or 3 teams of 4)
- Place 1 person from each team behind the recycling bin.
- Have the rest of the team form a line behind the pile of containers.
- The first person in line throws each container one by one, trying to make it into the trash can or box.
- As soon as they've thrown the third piece, the "thrower" runs down to the recycling bin.
- The container "thrower" and the container "catcher" must tag hands at the recycling bin.
- The person who was standing behind the water bottle collects all three containers to take them back to the next person in line. That person hands off the containers to the next person in line and goes to the back of the line.
- The container thrower becomes the "catcher" for the next person in line.
- Repeat until everyone has had a turn.
- Repeat activity as long as time permits.