

Eco-Note

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Professionals
Spring 2009

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Earth Day, April 22, 2010

“According to the Clean Air Council, each American generates over four pounds of trash per day and up to 56 tons of trash per year. Only about 1/10 of that trash gets recycled: the rest ends up in landfills. Roughly one-third of our trash comes just from packaging... “ (Keeping our earth green, Castaldo, 2008). Another large source of solid waste is food. Celebrate **Earth Day 2010** this year by committing to decrease the amount of trash your early childhood program throws away!!



Where do we start? – Recycling

Talking with kids about trash and recycling can be quite engaging. Here are children's books from the Adair Co. Public Library, as well as some others, that can help you get started:

I Stink by Kate and Jim McMullan can lead to animated conversations, drawings, and pretend play about garbage collectors. Ask them about things they throw away and where they think they go.

I Drive a Garbage Truck by Sarah Bridges can be used to introduce recycling, as the book explores the duties of garbage collectors, how they don't pick up items to be recycled, and how that some items, such as appliances, cannot go out with the regular trash.

Where Does All the Garbage Go? by Melvin Berger talks about how new items can be made from old items if they are recycled, as well as some about composting. It also has real pictures of mountains of trash. What if our whole playground was filled with trash? Where would we play?

Recycle Every Day! By Nancy Elizabeth Wallace is a very simple book about different

things we can recycle each day of the week. The illustrations are even collages of recycled materials. Create your own collages from collected materials.

While reading these books, introduce your own recycling project at school. Get containers – anything from stackable plastic recycling containers with lids to large cardboard boxes. Start collecting the recyclable materials from your center. You can even invite families to bring items. (NOTE: If you have children with allergies, please let parents know NOT to bring product containers that have those ingredients.)

The categories that can best be reused by the kids in projects could include newspapers, magazines, paper, cardboard, and plastic. If items such as glass, tin cans, or aluminum cans are collected, they will need to be stored outside of the classroom.

Kids can help sort items, count items, and even weigh them, all meaningful and relevant math experiences. They can then stretch their creativity by creating with the materials. You can offer scissors, glue, collage materials, tape, and string.

Where do we start? -- Composting

“Sarah Sylvia Cynthia Stout” who would not take the garbage out by Shel Silverstein can be a great visual way to introduce composting.

- Consider making a New Year's resolution to try using worms to compost food wastes or to compost your yard waste. Visit www.dnr.mo.gov for details about how to get started.

Why is this important?

The three R's – reduce, reuse, and recycle – all help to cut down on the amount of waste thrown away. They conserve natural resources, landfill space, and energy. Plus, the three R's save land and money communities must use to dispose of waste in landfills. Missouri has a goal of reducing the amount of waste going into landfills by 40 percent. Everyone can help meet this goal, and early childhood settings are no exception!

REMINDER: Giving kids frequent experiences with nature is a necessary step in helping them care about the Earth. Try to spend LOTS of time outside as we transition into spring. Point out changes like singing birds, flowers growing and blooming, buds on the trees, and the warmer weather.



There are also wonderful children's books about nature experiences and caring for the earth. Here are just a few:

[A Cool Drink of Water](#) by Barbara Kerley
[Just Me and My Dad](#) by Mercer Mayer
[It Looked Like Spilt Milk](#) by Charles G. Shaw
[I'm a Pill Bug](#) by Yukihisa Tokuda

[Mud](#) by Mary Lyn Ray
[Water](#) by Frank Asch

Your ideas can be included in the next newsletter! Send your ideas to kvillecdc@hotmail.com to share them with others who work with young children!

Ideas to pass along to your parents to decrease the amount of waste that goes to our Missouri landfills:

REDUCE

- Purchase products in bulk to decrease the amount of packaging trash.
- Pay attention for a week to what you throw away. How can you reduce that amount?

REUSE

- As you are transitioning to summer clothes and doing other spring cleaning, donate unneeded items to a secondhand store instead of throwing them away.
- Reuse product containers for plants outside and in your home.
- Join your local Freecycle group online. You can post items to have to give away or request items you need, all for free.

RECYCLE

- Help your child learn necessary math skills as well as stewardship practices by recycling at home. Use large cardboard boxes to sort, count, and weigh items that can be recycled.

Please contact the Kirksville Child Development Center at 660-665-0487 or at www.kirksvillecdc.org or contact the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at www.dnr.mo.gov for more information.