

Eco-Note

A Newsletter for Early Childhood Professionals
Summer 2010

Sent to you by the Kirskville Child Development Center with funding from
Missouri's Department of Natural Resources and Solid Waste Management District C

It's hard to believe the summer is going by so quickly!

Now is the time to begin planning how your program can incorporate environmentally responsible practices this summer and during the new school year. Enjoy the following suggestions, and please contact the K-CDC with any other ideas you have!!



Why is this important?

The three R's – reduce, reuse, and recycle – all help to cut down on the amount of waste throw 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!

Reduce

Consider using email for newsletters, announcements and reminders for those families who check their email. This reduces the amount of paper waste and helps your budget.

Use 2-sided copies whenever you can.

Reuse

Summer is the perfect time for water play outdoors. It helps the kids keep cool, is fun, and offers endless opportunities for science experiences. Invite kids, with the help of their families, to collect and bring to school plastic containers that can be used on the playground or in the classroom with water. These can be anything from frozen juice containers to yogurt containers to giant juice jugs. Have a swimming suit day. Drill holes in the bottoms of some of them for a rain effect. Kids explore

conserving volume as they pour from one container to another, begin to understand erosion when water is used with sand or dirt, exercise creativity by making old-fashioned mud pies, and simply have fun, all while reusing plastic containers!!

Start collecting large coffee or food cans to make stilts. Puncture 2 holes directly across from each other near the bottom of 2 cans. Hammer down or cover all sharp edges. Use clothesline rope to create the handles, using a child to measure the right length. It offers an economical and environmentally responsible experience in balance and coordination.

Recycle

Invite families to bring donate old letterhead or other paper products from their places of work. Use them for newsletters or put them in your writing and art centers.

Compost

Visit www.dnr.mo.gov for a very simple plan for a circular compost bin. And don't forget about starting a worm farm in a jar!!

MOTIVATING FACT from OurEarth.org

“By recycling materials such as aluminum cans, newspapers, and glass jars, you can save energy and landfill space, conserve natural resources, and also prevent pollution. Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, three cubic yards of landfill space, two barrels of oil, and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity – enough energy to power the average US home for five months.”

Family Ideas for making environmentally responsible choices:

- Invite your child to create a Recycled Bluebird House. You can find the directions for this house at www.dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub2048.pdf. The design uses no screws or hinges and is easily cleaned. Experiences of nature can be filled with enjoyment and wonder. Your child can also sharpen their observation skills by talking about the birds and how they behave.
- Plan your travels wisely. Take shorter trips, combine errands, and carpool when possible. Less time driving equals less impact on the environment.
- Walk and bike as much as possible, especially when the weather is nice. Attach a basket or trailer to your bike for transporting smaller children or purchases. This not only is wise environmentally, it also offers exercise and an experience of the outdoors.
- Purchase reuseable water bottles for your family.
- Take a field trip to a local berry farm or dairy farm or visit the Farmer's Market on Saturdays in Kirksville. This can teach your child about where food comes from as well as decreasing the amount of packaging and travel waste involved in commercial foods.



- Taken from DNR's website: "A camping trip generally starts with packing. Make a list of everything you anticipate needing for the trip and go shopping only once. It is more efficient and will save you fuel and money. Look for a tent or sleeping bag made from recycled materials at your local camping supply store if you don't already have one. Bring reusable dishes that can be used for years, and a bucket with biodegradable soap to wash them in rather than purchasing paper or Styrofoam one-use plates and plastic utensils. Bring dish towels from home instead of paper towels. Bring storage containers for leftovers instead of plastic bags. Look for solar powered cook stoves and crank powered radios and flashlights. Use citronella candles instead of bug sprays that contain chemicals. The candles are an excellent way to repel insects."
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- Creative Gardening Ideas: Save old tires from landfills by very carefully cutting off one side wall on a large tire, place the tire in your garden and fill it with soil, manure or compost. The tires retain a bit more heat to aid in growing, and when used as a raised bed they warm faster. Use plastic containers, old shoes, washtubs, old dresser drawers, buckets, or wagons as a great way to reuse and recycle items that might otherwise be discarded.



Please contact the **Kirksville Child Development Center** at 660-665-5232 or at www.kirksvillecdc.org or contact the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at www.dnr.mo.gov for more information.