

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle: **Suggestions for Children**

The three R's always come in the same order.

Reduce always comes first because reducing what we use and what we waste means using fewer natural resources and less energy.

Reuse comes second because reusing items—using them twice or many times instead of just once—keeps them from becoming waste.

Recycle comes third, but not last. Recycling—converting used items back into raw materials, then making new products with them—conserves our valuable natural resources and reduces the need to put as much waste into our landfills.

Reduce

- * When you go shopping, take along a bag and tell the cashier that you won't need a new one.
- * Avoid buying fast food unless it is served in recyclable packages.
- * Boycott products that are overpackaged. Choose items packaged in containers that are recyclable or made of recycled materials. Write to companies and tell them why you are making these choices.
- * Don't buy or use disposable products. Switch to cloth napkins, carry drinks in refillable thermos bottles, and carry your lunch in washable, reusable containers. Instead of paper towels, use a cloth or sponge to clean up.
- * Don't buy aerosol cans. They can't be recycled, and they contain ingredients which cause air pollution. Instead look for spray bottles or other alternatives.
- * Try to avoid creating hazardous wastes. Many household cleaning products can be replaced with simpler, less hazardous materials.
- * Reduce your use of batteries. They contain heavy metals that are toxic. Try to use mechanical objects, ones that plug in, or rechargeable batteries.

Reuse

- * Donate outgrown toys and clothing to a worthy cause, rather than throwing them away. Even worn-out clothing can be used as rags for cleaning, car polishing, etc., rather than using disposable paper towels.

- * Create a compost pile. With very little effort, yard wastes and food scraps can be made into compost, which will help your garden or yard to grow.
- * Learn to fix things rather than throwing them away. When buying new objects, look for sturdy ones that will last for a long time.
- * If you or your family have old magazines or books you want to get rid of, donate them to a hospital, nursing home, or waiting room rather than throwing them away. Share a subscription with a friend.

Recycle

- * Find out what is recyclable in your community, and help your family to make whatever changes are necessary to recycle everything possible.
- * Ask your parents to buy drinks in glass or aluminum containers instead of plastic, since glass and aluminum are easier to recycle. Avoid buying drinks in unrecyclable containers.
- * Whenever possible, choose products made from recycled materials. Unless people want to buy recycled products, companies will not produce them.

Adapted from *Trash Goes to School*, produced by the Cornell Waste Management Institute working with a team of people from Cornell Cooperative Extension and other agencies in New York State.