

Cool Cubbies Project: Waste teaching notes



What is waste?

Rubbish or garbage or waste is material that is thrown away because it is considered unwanted or useless. We produce waste as part of our everyday living and we don't normally give much thought about it. Our way of living has changed; disposable goods and convenience foods with lots of packaging are now very common. People choose disposable items such as tissues and nappies instead of reusable options. We are more likely to buy a new product than fix a broken one. Suitable landfill sites are becoming harder to find due to increased population pressures and concerns with leachate, smell, noise, pests and rubbish. Waste is a growing problem within our society today. Although each year we recycle more, we also create more waste due to our growing population and consumer society.

Our waste is made up of:

- Organics - food scraps and garden waste.
- Recyclables - paper and cardboard, aluminium and steel cans, milk and juice cartons, glass bottles and jars and plastics.
- Other – everything else must go to landfill.

The benefits of minimising waste

There are many good reasons for minimising the waste we create. It conserves valuable resources and saves money. It also reduces the impact on the environment, i.e. fewer areas need to be affected by mining, harvesting and landfill, and fewer fossil fuels are used, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and release of other pollutants. Also less waste ensures the life of existing landfill sites is extended.

Waste as a resource – all the R's

It's time to think of our waste as a resource. We can all play our part in reducing the volume of garbage going to landfill by:

- Reducing the number of products and packaging bought.
- Reusing items instead of buying new or disposable ones.
- Recycling everything that our council will collect.
- Rethinking, such as taking our own bags and buying goods that have been made of recyclable material or products without packaging.

Reference and for more information visit the Lismore City Council website www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

Sustainable waste management actions

To reduce and manage waste wisely at your centre, consider these action ideas:

- ✓ Find out exactly what materials are accepted in the waste collection service run by your local council. Ring or visit your local council website.
- ✓ Set up a separate 3-bin system, this is a team project for the children, staff and the cleaner. Have one for food scraps and compostable material for worm farms, compost bins, or sent home for chooks. Another for recycling and a third for landfill, i.e. the material that cannot be used again.
- ✓ Install a worm farm and/or compost bin and create a veggie patch to use the castings and soil.



Left

This recycling and reuse centre is also the storage of items that will be perfect for craft and other activities in the program.

Right

Children involved in a separate 3-bin system. Each day they empty their food scrap bins into the worm farm.



- ✓ Offer children information on separating and disposing rubbish through discussions and stories on landfill sites and re-using valuable materials.
- ✓ Document what the children are learning and display this information to parents. Promote your waste reduction focus to parents by talking to them, putting information in newsletters and inviting them to participate. Set up displays, give parents fact sheets in newsletters.
- ✓ Investigate reducing the chemicals that are used in your service. Look at buying and using environmentally-friendly cleaning products.
- ✓ Review your purchasing habits. Buy products with recycled content, e.g. toilet paper and paper towel.
- ✓ Reduce the number of disposable items used in your services.
- ✓ Promote Low Waste Lunches (nude food) that avoids packaging, cling wrap and throw away items.
- ✓ Review the type of bins used in the service and check signage used on bins.
- ✓ Reuse envelopes and paper for art or for notepads.
- ✓ Set the printer to double-sided printing.
- ✓ Avoid the use of plastic wrap in kitchens.
- ✓ Reduce the use of bin liners.
- ✓ Email centre newsletters to families.
- ✓ Have working bees to repair items or prepare veggie gardens.
- ✓ Operate a children's book/clothing/toys or baby equipment exchange.



Bangalow Community Children's Centre created a collage "no more" to remind parents and caregivers about low-waste lunches. The children and staff gathered all the unwanted packaging from lunches that had been brought into the centre and made a collage with the rubbish. The collage was then displayed at a local Art Show in May 2009.

Program ideas

Movement or music sessions – Bin collection day, use lots of loud and tinny instruments.

Stories – Picture story books and poetry. Tell the story of sand that is made into a glass bottle, used and recycled again and again. Or a plastic bottle that is used, dropped, goes down the drain and ends up in the ocean.

Creative arts – Make a collage of all the non-recycling items collected after lunch.

Centre walks – Find all the bins in your centre and label them with compost/recycle/landfill stickers (draw).

Interest table – A collection of all the items (make them clean and safe) that can be recycled by your council, with pictures of the recycle symbol and local rubbish truck. Find a chart of what these recycled materials are made into. Get help from your council.

Sensory – Explore the worms and worm farm alongside the children.

Dramatic play – Hard hats, wood, tins, plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, etc. What is happening at the Recycle Centre?

Science – Study the worm farm. Make a photographic record of food scraps going in, then again over the days and weeks as they break down and change into soil. Water the compost and see if anything grows? Study the life of worms.

Teachable moments – Rubbish bin day. Sorting rubbish at morning tea and lunch, reusing envelopes, cards, boxes, etc. for craft or drafts. Notice lunches with or without packaging. Question if plastic gets in the worm bin.