

Super Sorters

Audience: K – 2nd

Subject: Waste Reduction

Location: Classroom / can be adapted for the home

Vocabulary: Landfill, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, Donate, Compost

North Carolina Essential Standards: SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.3, L.K.5, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, L.1.5, 1.L.1, SL.2.1, SL.2.3

Goal: Students understand how to reduce waste.

Objectives: Students know what goes in the blue recycling bin. Students know that you recycle plastic bags at the grocery store. Students know that they can't recycle single use plastics like plastic straws, utensils and to-go items.

Time: 30 minutes

Method: Students will sort various items into recycling, composting, donation, grocery store and landfill bins.

Background:

Refer to curbie.com for a specific list of what can and what can't go in the blue bin locally in Asheville Buncombe County. Recycling fact sheets available at www.recyclemorenc.org. To use the City of Asheville's Waste Wizard go to www.ashevilenc.gov/department/public-works/sanitation/avl-collects/

In general

Recycling:

One can recycle plastic containers, tubs, and bottles #1 - #7 found at a grocery store , aluminum cans, steel cans, mixed paper and cardboard.

Composting:

Compost food scraps *excluding* meats, dairy, fats, and oils in a backyard composter. Compost food scraps *including* meats, dairy, fats, and oils at a commercial composting facility. *Compost Now* does bring compostables to a commercial composter.

Other options:

Recycle plastic grocery bags at the grocery store.

Donate old clothes, toys and furniture to consignment or a reuse store.

Materials:

Trash bag with mixed recycling, composting, donation, plastic bags and landfill items.

Landfill, Compost, Donation, Grocery Store, and Recycle Signs

5 bins to sort items

Landfill: Single-use plastics like plastic straws, plastic utensils, plastic cups (including Starbucks and other to-go cups and SOLO cups), to-go items and to-go lids all must be placed in the trash.

Suggested Procedures:

1. Make 5 signs: Landfill, Recycling, Composting, Donate, Grocery Store
2. Using tape, place signs on five bins / containers / boxes / cans, whatever works to serve as a receptacle.
3. Prepare a pile of items that are common waste items for kids that will be sorted into the five bins. Include:
 1. Landfill items: to-go items, plastic utensils, plastic straws, chip bags, styrofoam egg carton (may be taken by Publix)
 2. Recycling items: plastic grocery store containers like yogurt, juice box, milk carton, aluminum can, plastic water bottle, paper egg carton, cereal box
 3. Composting items: Use plastic food items if available, if not pictures will work
 4. Donate items: used clothing that is still able to be worn and unbroken toys
 5. Grocery store items: Plastic bag, plastic ziplock bag, and plastic film used in packaging
4. Review what each bin represents and how all but one serves a purpose of waste reduction.
5. Discuss the 4 R's of recycling (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and recycle!). We can say "No" to plastic with a reusable water bottle and reusable bag. We can reduce our waste by buying items with less packaging. We can reuse items before recycling them. Hold up a plastic container and ask how they can reuse it. The final R is Recycle! It is the last choice we should make in waste reduction.
6. Bring out the pile of items and discuss how big it is. Say that instead of throwing all of these things away we are going to learn to be super sorters. Instead of sending all of these items to the landfill we are going to try to keep it out of the landfill bin. Show a picture of a landfill if possible. Describe a landfill as a place where all discarded items go. A landfill is a place lined with plastic to keep the trash from the surrounding soil and groundwater. Landfills are not good for the health of people or animals.
7. Pick up or have students pick up one item at a time and with group effort help them decide what bin it should go in.
8. Students one at a time put their object in the correct bin.
9. After you have finished look at how much is in the landfill bin. Is there any way to reduce that even more?
10. Do a recycled craft if time permits.

Evaluation:

Play again, this time see how many items end up in the correct bin.

This lesson is for the residents of the City of Asheville in partnership with the City of Asheville.