

PLAYHOUSE RECYCLING

Recycling is a family-friendly activity that can help get young children excited about protecting the environment. Teaching children how to recycle at a young age is important to establishing life-long recycling habits, especially when they are having fun doing it! If you have a playhouse area in your home or classroom, establishing a recycling sorting center within the playhouse can reinforce recycling as a norm.

Outcome

Create a recycling sorting center in your child's playhouse to create lifelong recycling habits.

Audience

Youth (age 2+) with the assistance of an adult

Time

Variable

Concepts

- Recycling is an easy thing that everyone can do to protect the environment.
- When we recycle, the stuff we no longer need gets made into new items.

Supplies

- Two colored plastic tubs or boxes labeled for recycling, organics and trash.
- Labels or art supplies to create labels. Clean and empty items that can be recycled (plastic bottles, paper and aluminum cans) and items that go in the trash (Styrofoam, wrappers, plastic wrap, etc.)
- Art supplies for decorating and labeling waste bins.



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Preparation

- Set up your containers, making sure that the trash, recycling and organics bins are placed together wherever you set them up.
- Label the containers. The recycling sign should depict what can be recycled, such as plastic bottles, cups and containers, metal cans, cartons, paper and glass.

Procedure

- Place labeled plastic tubs or boxes in the playhouse area in your classroom, at home or at your organization.
- Talk with children about recycling. Use the recyclable and non-recyclable items to explain the basics of how recycling works and what materials can be recycled. Encourage children to recycle when they use the playhouse area.
- Have children create recycling bins they can use at home. Have them create labels depicting what can be recycled and place them on boxes or containers they already have at home. To make the signs, children can either draw recyclable items or use pictures of recyclable items.

Discussion questions

- How did children react to the recycling sorting system in their playhouse? What did you expect? What surprised you?
- What did you learn about recycling? Were you surprised by any materials that you didn't know were recyclable?
- How can teaching children to recycle at a young age establish lifelong recycling habits?

Resources

- **Handout:** Recycling Guide (available in English or bilingual in English and Cambodian Khmer, Hmong, Lao, Spanish, Somali, Thai and Vietnamese)
- What can my family recycle worksheet (*see Appendix*).