

# Kids Go Green — Fact Sheet

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## Introduction

Each of you can do your part when it comes to protecting the environment. Even as kids, you can start to make a difference. You can learn about how to help and encourage others to make a difference too.

### Make a difference by: **Recycling**

Did you know that many materials you use every day can be used again and again? After it gets set on the curb, have you ever wondered, “Where does our trash go?”

When adults talk about recycling, they are talking about how things you would think of as “trash” can be used again and turned into new products instead of decaying in a landfill. Here are some examples of things that can be recycled: soda cans, plastic bottles, newspaper, cardboard boxes, and soup cans.

Did you know that plastic juice bottles can be used to help make carpet? How about turning old tires into ground cover for your playground?

### Make a difference by: **Composting**

How does composting help save the earth? When you compost, nutrients from food help make plants healthy and strong. Worms play a major role in composting. They eat “garbage” and help turn it into nutritious food for plants and trees.

Worms are the heroes of the garden. They eat leftover food and turn this waste into castings. These worm castings become food for plants. The way the worms move is called “tunneling,” which also helps plants by making room for oxygen to reach the roots buried deep underground.

### Did you know you can compost at home?

1. You can recycle leaves and other plant materials at home by setting up a compost bin. Your bin can be made out of chicken wire, an old bird cage, or a plastic tub.\*
2. Recipe: air, water, brown stuff, green stuff, microorganisms, and worms

**Brown stuff** is dead, dried plants and leaves.

**Green stuff** isn’t always green, but includes fresh, living parts, such as grass, vegetable scraps, other plants, egg shells, coffee grounds and filters, newspapers, tea bags, and regular, nonglossy paper.

**Microorganisms and worms** can be added. Red wigglers (red worms or manure worms) are the hardest working, but earthworms will work hard for you too!

**Do not use** meat, fat, pet droppings, bones, milk, cheese, or oils. These items can attract pests, deplete necessary moisture, or pose health risks.

3. Once you have added both brown and green stuff, shovel some soil on top. Repeat this to make layers, as in a cake. Make sure each layer gets a good sprinkling of water, and add worms as you are making the layers. (Remember: If you are using a plastic tub, your worms can't go deep enough into the ground when the weather turns cold. This could cause them to freeze and die).
4. Just wait! Microorganisms and worms will now be hard at work.
5. You can keep adding more scraps from your kitchen, grass clippings, and leaves.
6. Once the materials you have added look like dirt, you have compost. Compost is dark, earthy-smelling stuff rich in nutrients. Plants love it.
7. Use your compost as mulch around gardens and other plants, or use it in potting soil.

\*To make a plastic tub worm bin, see this website for detailed, kid-friendly directions: <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/worms/>

## Make a difference by: **Conserving**

What does conserving mean, and how can little changes help save the earth? Conserving is another word for saving. When you conserve energy, you are helping save resources often lost through wasteful behaviors. Some examples of conserving behaviors might include:

- turning off the water while brushing your teeth,
- turning off lights on when you leave the room,
- turning off the car when you stop at the grocery store, or
- turning off your video game when you leave to go to your friend's house.

What other ways can you think of to conserve energy? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If everyone learns to conserve more energy, the planet will be a cleaner, healthier place with more resources for everyone to enjoy.

## Make a difference by: **Reusing**

Can your used items be turned into other things? How can you give things a "new life" before sending them to the dump? When you reuse items, you give them a second chance at becoming something unique and creative. Some things you can reuse or "make new" include the following:

- Shoeboxes — can become keepsake boxes.
- Empty tin cans — can become pencil holders.
- Empty, clean baby food jars — can store buttons.
- Old T-shirts — can be made into grocery bags.



What other things can you reuse? \_\_\_\_\_

By reusing, you can create less waste and help give your “trash” a new life.

## Fun websites to check out

- Adventures of Herman the Worm: [urbanext.illinois.edu/worms/](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/worms/)
- County of San Mateo Recycle Works: [www.recycleworks.org/kids/](http://www.recycleworks.org/kids/)
- Environmental Kids Club: [www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)
- Nick Jr. Creative Recycling: [www.nickjr.com/crafts/all-shows/creative-recycling-crafts/all-ages/index.jhtml](http://www.nickjr.com/crafts/all-shows/creative-recycling-crafts/all-ages/index.jhtml)
- Junior Master Gardeners: [jmgkids.us](http://jmgkids.us)

## Activity

Use the word bank to help you find all the words in this word search puzzle. Words go across forward and backward, up and down, and diagonally.

### Kids Go Green Word Search

T	K	G	R	E	E	N	L	E	E	O
T	N	E	M	N	O	R	I	V	N	E
R	E	C	Y	C	L	E	W	R	P	S
F	E	P	S	D	O	A	P	E	L	U
D	N	D	P	M	S	D	Z	S	A	E
X	B	G	U	T	R	K	U	N	N	R
M	H	X	E	C	U	O	X	O	T	R
H	T	R	A	E	E	P	W	C	S	D

CONSERVE	WORMS	ENVIRONMENT
GREEN	PLANTS	RECYCLE
REDUCE	REUSE	WASTE



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