



# Eco-Healthy Child Care®



Eco-Healthy Child Care® helps early childhood learning environments to be as healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxic chemicals.

## Recycling & Garbage Storage

Americans generate trash at an astonishing rate of four pounds per day per person, which translates to 600,000 tons per day or 210 million tons per year! Electronic waste or "e-waste" (i.e., computers, televisions, VCRs, stereos, copiers, fax machines) alone is estimated to be 20-25 million tons per year globally. E-waste can contain many toxic elements and agents. While the most important way to save valuable resources is to use as few as possible in the first place, recycling and using recycled products is the next best step.

### Benefits of Recycling

- Conserves natural resources like trees, metal, oil, and minerals for future generations.
- Lessens habitat destruction as a result of deforestation. Recycling reduces need for raw materials and helps preserve our forests.
- Saves energy. A lot of energy is needed to make products from raw materials; recycling requires much less energy.
- Prevents emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, leading to cleaner air, cleaner water and a more stable climate.
- Reduces the need for landfills and incinerators.

### 21 Ways to Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

1. Recycle glass, paper, cardboard, aluminum and plastic.
2. Institute a recycling program that the children participate in and are responsible for. Children are never too young to learn to recycle.
3. Compost food scraps. Start a worm bin or other composting system. Check with your health consultant as to how and where this may be done according to your state child care regulations.
4. Avoid using disposable plates, cups, and silverware.
5. Buy/sell used items (always check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website for product recalls on used toys and equipment). Be especially vigilant about looking for lead and choking hazards.
6. Substitute rechargeable batteries for throw-away batteries.
7. Use reusable bags for shopping.
8. Reduce junk mail by canceling duplicates and asking to be removed from unwanted mailing lists.
9. Donate used books and magazines to your local library, school, hospital or nursing home.
10. Donate unwanted toys and clothing to your local charity.
11. Replace paper napkins and towels with cloth napkins and towels. Cloth hand towels and towels for cleaning may be used for "single use" only to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
12. Purchase toilet paper made from recycled content.
13. Choose recycled office paper for printing.
14. Buy in bulk; use your own reusable containers.
15. Reuse food jars for storage. Be sure to wash and sanitize reusable food containers before using for food storage again.
16. Donate old computers to schools or non profits.
17. Pick up books, CDs, and DVDs from your local library or used bookstore.

18. Properly recycle all electronic products.
19. Support ‘Manufacture Takeback Programs’ – where manufacturers or retailers accept used electronic products back from their customers to recycle, reuse, or dispose of the product properly.
20. Return unused drugs to a pharmacy; do not flush remaining portions down the toilet.
21. Recycle items containing mercury (batteries, thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent light bulbs) by taking them to a hazardous waste facility. Visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) to find a location near you.

### Garbage Storage \*

Keep garbage areas clean. Follow these suggestions to avoid pests and to minimize odors.

- Take the trash out regularly; don’t let trash pile up!
- Clean empty trash cans and remove trash from inside the building at the end of the day.

- Make sure indoor garbage containers have tight-fitting lids and plastic linings.
- Keep outdoor garbage containers, including composting bins, covered tightly. Ensure the lids fit snugly to form a seal.
- Ensure all garbage areas are inaccessible to children.
- Keep garbage storage areas (large dumpsters/cans collected by trucks) at least 50 feet away from entranceways of the child care facility or play yard. These containers should be on pest-proof pavement such as concrete, that can be cleaned regularly. Sticky spilled liquids attract pests.
- Promptly recycle all appropriate materials (glass, cardboard, plastic, paper and aluminum). Be sure to rinse and clean recyclables.

\* *Adapted from Integrated Pest Management: A Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs (link at [www.cehn.org/ehcc/resources](http://www.cehn.org/ehcc/resources)).*

### Recycling Resources

- EPA: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle  
[www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/rrr/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/rrr/index.htm)
- Eco Tips  
[www.globalstewards.org/ecotips.htm](http://www.globalstewards.org/ecotips.htm)
- Freecycle  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)
- The Story of Stuff  
[www.storyofstuff.com](http://www.storyofstuff.com)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
**Call: 202-543-4033, ext. 13**  
**Email: [info@ecohealthychildcare.org](mailto:info@ecohealthychildcare.org)**  
**Visit: [www.cehn.org/ehcc](http://www.cehn.org/ehcc)**

➔ More Recycling resources can be found at: [www.cehn.org/ehcc/resources](http://www.cehn.org/ehcc/resources)

*Eco-Healthy Child Care® (EHCC) is a science-based, award-winning national program that seeks to improve the environmental health of children by partnering with child care professionals to eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards found in child care facilities. Originally created by the Oregon Environmental Council in 2005, EHCC is now managed by Children’s Environmental Health Network.*