

# Kids Become Junior Environmentalists



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Kids are excellent idea generators when it comes to the future. They can contribute to solutions with actions in their home environment. Kids can do their part to impact largescale problems like waste.

## Limiting Waste

There is a lot of waste at school. Snack food wrappers, utensil waste, food packaging, milk cartons, partially consumed food. ALL of it is thrown away after single consumption. Most snack items that kids bring to school also include unnecessary packaging. Kids do their best to throw their wrappers and waste away, but none of them are recycled.

Single use consumption is a big problem at school when it comes to food. It is important to talk to your kids about minimizing waste through the following suggested actions:

Start at home. When kids get involved in simple acts of making food instead of eating packaged food, they reduce waste from single use products.

Many processed foods come with packaging that can be eliminated by cooking more and using less.

Try hydrating by drinking water out of reusable containers, instead of plastic water bottles.

Encourage kids to participate in sorting and recycling food materials at home. Even at an early age, kids can part of a ripple effect that reduces waste.

Kids can become junior environmentalists at school with little acts that help keep the school clean.

Think about bringing snacks in reusable containers to school, instead of throwing packaging away.

Reusable utensils and hydration containers are excellent resources instead of daily plastic water bottles for reducing waste at school.

Have conversations about reusing lunch bags and plastic containers.

## Reusable Product Options

There are so many reusable plastic-free products targeted at youth. I was impressed with Target's "Back to School" display and range of products that included cloth themed lunch bags, beeswax wrap, reusable lunch containers, and reusable hydro containers. You and your children can have fun picking out sustainable snack bags and reusable water bottles for the new school year. You can also encourage your children to add stickers to personalize their items. The less single-use packaging that is brought to school, the better outcome for waste.

Better habits at home create mindfulness and sustainability at school, which makes for a healthier environment.

## Redesign and Reuse Packaging Art Project

Kids love to redesign cardboard and single use materials into TRASHY ART. You and your children can collect paper packaging at home, including cardboard and plastic food containers to complete the following activity:

Recycle a poster board and let kids create a montage of recycled materials including old toys.

Get creative at building with non-standard materials.

Use glue and tape to secure materials on the board.

When the art board construction is completed, paint it with white primer to neutralize the background.

Once it dries, use markers or various paint colors to pop some color into the new design.

Give the art product a title or name to identify a playful theme that has been developed, like a skateboard park with cool jumps.

Display the repurposed art before you just throw it away as waste.