

Teaching your Children about Waste Management

Introduction

Teaching kids about the impact of waste on the earth is as simple as remembering the three R's: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**. Begin by empowering children with opportunities for keeping the earth clean. Make a family goal to find out about the different ways to dispose of different items properly, about local recyclers and how much waste they take. Visit a local recycling centre or exhibition to show kids how recycling works and what types of materials are recyclable.

Learning about waste and recycling is an activity that even small children can participate in. Let them know what their efforts can do to help, and teach them the proper methods of waste disposal.

What is waste? (trash, garbage, rubbish, refuse)

Waste is an unwanted or undesired material or substance. It may consist of the unwanted materials left over from a manufacturing process (industrial, commercial, mining or agricultural operations,) or from community and household activities. The material may be discarded or accumulated, stored, or treated (physically, chemically, or biologically), prior to being discarded or recycled. It is also used to describe something we use inefficiently or inappropriately.

What you need to do?

Once your family knows what types of household materials can be reused or recycled instead of becoming garbage, set up a recycling centre in your home.

- Place bins in strategic locations, like the kitchen and bathroom, and make picture labels for each type of material (plastics, paper, glass, and unwanted items). Make a simple list of instructions for each type of material (for example, list the types of glass, plastics, and paper that can be recycled and any specific

instructions for that type of material).

- Let kids help think of ways to reuse household waste. Give them examples like reusing plastic containers as holders for crayons, making bird feeders from milk jugs, and reusing gift bags. Items like empty bath tissue and paper towel holders can become part of a homemade toy structure. Make picture frames for the grandparents from old CD cases or plant a garden together. Compost food waste to make a natural fertilizer for the garden and household plants.

Please note: Recycling should always be done with parental supervision where small children are concerned. Some older household items may contain lead paint, asbestos, or may be a safety hazard. Check with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) for questionable items and keep toxic and hazardous materials away from children and pets.

Importance and benefits of waste recycling

1. Recycling helps protect the environment. This is because the recyclable waste materials would have been burnt or ended up in the landfill. Pollution of the air, land, water and soil is reduced.
2. Recycling conserves natural resources, it ensures that we do not depend too much on raw (natural) resources, which are already massively depleted.
3. Recycling saves energy. It takes more energy to produce items with raw materials than from recycling used materials. This means we are more energy efficient and the prices of products can come down.
4. Recycling creates jobs. People are employed to collect, sort and work in recycling companies. Others also get jobs with businesses that work with these recycling units.

Did you know?

- Every ton of paper we recycle saves 17 trees.
- One ton of recycled paper saves 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, and enough energy to run one home for five months.
- Recycled paper can be made into paper towels, tissue, writing and printing paper, boxes, construction products, packaging and compost.
- Recycling one aluminium can saves enough energy to power a computer for 3 hours, and recycling one ton of aluminium saves over 10 years of household energy.
- Recycling aluminium cuts steel mill water and air pollution by 70%.
- Glass never wears out and can be recycled forever.
- A ton of recycled glass saves 603kg of sand, 196kg of soda ash, 196kg of limestone, and 68kg of feldspar.
- Styrofoam is completely un-recyclable.
- One dollar out of every 11 in food costs is spent on packaging.
- In Zimbabwe **150 000** tonnes of domestic waste is generated per year & food waste constitutes about 70% of the total.

For more information on waste management, please call or visit the nearest EMA office in your area.

As we approach the fire season please ensure that you have put in place standard fireguards that are at least 9m wide. Report all unattended fires in your area to EMA, Forestry Commission or ZRP.

Please talk to us we are always ready to listen. Email: eep@ema.co.zw or call us on 04

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