

Parenting Together

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Learning about Recyclables

Most children learn that you should recycle plastic water bottles and paper, however, there's quite a bit more to recycling than putting these items in blue bins, including many ways we can reuse and repurpose items. As a parent or caregiver, you have the opportunity to teach your child how to be environmentally responsible early on in life. By instilling in your child a strong sense of environmental ethics, you can provide them the knowledge they need to minimize their carbon footprint, and can help make eco-friendliness second nature to them.

When your child is old enough, introducing them to recycling at home can build their foundational knowledge about recycling. A good first lesson is to lay out an assortment of trash and recyclables, and have them help you separate the two into their bins. This gives children the chance to see and hear about what items are recyclable and which ones are not, and to ask questions about why.

Getting Creative with Recyclables

You can take steps to make recycling fun by using games and/or arts & crafts to help children learn to recycle. Many children love crafts and creating something new. There are endless ways to use recyclables to do so. One way to kick-off making crafts with recyclables is with a scavenger hunt.



A scavenger hunt can help children get excited about finding items around the home that they may have previously considered trash and encourage them to turn them into something new! At the end of the scavenger hunt, you can use what they found to create fun crafts. Using recycled objects to make crafts is a fun way to teach children all about the benefits of recycling. Read on for a fun list of some really creative ways to use recycled items. We hope your children will enjoy making these creative art projects.



1. Bottle Cap Fish

Create your own underwater paradise full of colorful fish, plants and bubbles. Collect plastic bottle caps (but be careful not to let children put these choking hazards in their mouths). Paint the caps bright colors and make a school of friendly fish. For full instructions, visit bit.ly/bottle-cap-fish

2. Toilet Roll Bird Feeder

Save cardboard toilet paper tubes. Cover the tubes in peanut butter, roll them in bird seed, and then hang them outside. Sit back and watch the birds flock to these tasty feeders. This is a craft you can enjoy making and continue to enjoy as you get to know the birds in your neighborhood.





3. Recycled CD Spring Birds

I personally love this one. They are just so cute! If you have an old stack of CDs laying around, draw on them, paint them, or decorate them to add to a mural or hang by a string. Children can enjoy turning old CDs into art, including different kinds of birds or other imaginary friends. For full instructions, visit: bit.ly/CD-birds



4. Tin Can Creatures

What could be better than little clusters of bright and colorful ladybugs decorating your garden? If you are able to safely remove the lids of tin cans so that there are no sharp edges, you can repurpose them with a little paint to give them a new life outdoors. The options for decorating them are endless: ladybug, bird, bumblebee, or even a monster! Let children get creative with their creations! For full instructions, visit: bit.ly/can-creatures



5. Papier-mâché Pots

Turn large beverage bottles or cleaned plastic food containers into a rainbow of brightly colored pots with tissue paper and glue. These plastic pots can be used for an indoor plant, for storing toys and/or trinkets, or for a gift. For full instructions, visit: bit.ly/paper-mache-pots

The Book Nook

Out of the Box

By Jemma Westing

Rainbow Weaver / Tejedora del arcoíris

By Linda Elovitz Marshall

Recycling Crafts

By Annalees Lim

We hope you give some (or all!) of these crafts a try with your children and explore other ways that you can reduce, reuse, recycle, and repurpose creatively. If you'd like even more ideas, visit this site for another 30 fun crafts for your children to create with recyclables: bit.ly/30-crafts

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For your local parenting resources visit us at:

orparenting.org

References

- The Importance Of Teaching Kids About Recycling
<https://www.eco-reusable.com/teaching-kids-about-recycling/>
- 3 Reasons to Celebrate Earth Day with Young Children
<https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/3-reasons-to-celebrate-earth-day-with-young-children/>
- 15 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day With Kids
<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/15-ways-to-celebrate-earth-day-with-kids>
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