

Practice ABCs of Reducing, Reusing and Recycling in the Classroom and at Home

Reading, writing and arithmetic may be top of mind as the school year approaches, yet askHRgreen.org wants parents and students to focus on reducing, reusing and recycling as they head back to school. These simple green tips will save families time and money, while making the school transition easy on the environment!

- **Take Inventory:** Before hitting the store for school supplies, take inventory of what is already around the house. See if last year's staples—such as binders, pencil cases, supply boxes and backpacks—could be used for another term.
- **Close the Recycling Loop:** When purchasing new items, such as pens, paper, notebooks and pencils, look for products made from recycled materials to close the recycling loop.
- **Waste-free Lunch:** No need to pack green eggs and ham to send children to school with a green lunch. Follow these quick tips for a waste-free lunch:
 - Use meal/snack containers instead of plastic baggies
 - Send flatware instead of disposable utensils
 - Use refillable drink bottles instead of juice boxes or bottled water
- **Pack Fresh, Pack Local:** Fill lunch boxes with locally-grown and locally-produced foods. It will reduce your carbon footprint with the added bonus of getting healthy foods into your child's tummy.
- **Buy Used and Save:** Consignment and thrift stores give clothes a second life and your wallet a break! Before buying new apparel, see what's available at local secondhand stores. In addition, many PTAs sell used school uniforms as a way to fund field trips and special programs.
- **Green Transit:** While walking or biking to school is the greenest way to get to class, sending your child to school on the bus saves gas and puts less cars on the road, resulting in fewer CO2 emissions and improved air quality.

Greening Up the Classroom

Once students are back in school, it's easy for teachers to set a good example in the classroom by having students take the askHRgreen.org Classroom Pledge. This simple checklist includes everything from having and using recycling receptacles in the classroom to unplugging electronics and turning off lights at the end of the day. It's fun to get caught "being green"! Having students sign the pledge sheet publicly commits classrooms to being environmentally responsible.

Download the pledge at www.askHRgreen.org/your-classroom, where teachers can find other helpful classroom tools including Green Learning, a fun and engaging guide to complement sixth-grade Earth Science studies. In addition, teachers can find out how to apply for environmental education mini-grants of up to \$500, courtesy of askHRgreen.org.