
Resources for the Creative Curriculum® Recycling Unit

DCPS Recycles! Program
D.C. Department of General Services
(DGS)

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About this Resource

This resource document was created by the DCPS Recycles! program in the D.C. Department of General Services (DGS). The intent is to provide resources and ideas for preschool educators teaching about recycling within the Creative Curriculum® as well as other preschool educators who would like to teach recycling to young students.

What is the Creative Curriculum®?

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, developed by Teaching Strategies®, is an early childhood education curriculum. The curriculum is used in preschool classrooms throughout D.C. Public Schools. The curriculum includes a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Study.

Walk the Talk: Start or Improve your School’s Recycling Program

The DC Environmental Literacy Plan defines environmental education as comprising three components - knowledge, skills and attitude.¹ Students learn by doing, so actually recycling is an important part of teaching about recycling. Start or improve your school’s recycling program so your students can put what you are teaching in action! Depending on your school’s recycling program status, you can participate, advocate, or innovate:

Participate – If a program is in place, DO IT with your students and connect it to the Creative Curriculum®.

Advocate - If a program is NOT in place, START one! Have students advocate for the program through drawings, art, letters, etc. If a program is in place, IMPROVE it! For instance, you can improve paper recycling in classrooms by conducting surveys of bin correctness. [Here’s how](http://dgs.dc.gov/node/882692) – (<http://dgs.dc.gov/node/882692>)

Innovate – Do investigations. Rethink, reduce, reuse! Get creative.

See DGS – Healthy Schools for more information and ideas: <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-healthy-schools>.

Teach Students Where DCPS Actually Waste Goes

Pictures speak louder than words. The “DCPS Recycles! Storybook” contains pictures of where waste (organics, mixed recycling and trash) from D.C. Public Schools actually goes and how it travels from the school to various facilities. Check it out at DGS-Healthy Schools under Recycling Resources: <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-healthy-schools>.

Classroom “Center” Examples

Houston Elementary School pre-K teachers outfitted their classrooms with Creative Curriculum Centers specific to recycling. For example, they outfitted their classrooms with “thrift stores” to teach students about reusing everyday household items.

¹ DC Environmental Literacy Plan. <http://doee.dc.gov/service/dc-environmental-literacy-plan>



Pictures from the “DCPS Recycles! Storybook”



Houston Elementary “Thrift Store”

Check out more pictures: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/133819934@N05/albums>

WOW Experiences! Examples

The Creative Curriculum® calls for “Wow! Experiences,” active, real-world experiences for students. Here are some examples:

Litter Walk. Go on a litter walk with students around school grounds. Instruct the students to point out litter and comment on the different types of materials. For safety reasons, only teachers and staff should pick up litter off the ground.

Building Walkthrough – Go on a walk around the building with students. Notice recycling bins, signage, bags/liners as well as if the correct contents are in the bins. You could also visit the dumpster area. You may even catch a glimpse of a trash or recycling truck in action! Use the [DCPS Recycles! Honor Roll Cheat Sheet](#) to identify what to look out for during the walk-through (<http://dgs.dc.gov/node/1106337>).

Invite a Recycling Expert to Class. The custodial staff is a great resource on recycling. Ask your school custodian to speak with your students. Alternatively, schedule a date for a member of the DCPS Recycles! team to come to your class to talk about recycling. Contact Cara Blumenthal at cara.blumenthal@dc.gov to schedule a date & time.

Books

The Creative Curriculum® includes suggested books as part of the curriculum. Here are some other books suggestions that may be age-appropriate and relevant:

- *Garbage Helps Our Gardens Grow: A Compost Story* by Linda Gleser
- *Composting: Nature’s Recyclers* by Robin Koontz
- *A Green Kid’s Guide to Composting* by Richard Lay
- *Compost Basics* by Mari Schuh
- *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* by Miranda Paul; Visit the book’s website for teacher resources: <http://oneplasticbag.com/teacher-resources>.



D.C. Department of Public Works’ Truck Touch Presentation at Burroughs ES about residential recycling. This is another example of a creative Wow! Experience.



Ms. Luckey, head custodian at Powell ES, visited with students to talk about recycling in their school.

Movie Clips

Below are clips related to reusing, reducing and recycling waste from various movies and documentaries:

- Magic School Bus (Preview) – The class takes a field trip to a recycling plant:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7oPnJ8l-b4>
- Toy Story 3 - “That’s not trash” scene:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4GOJyRx3l>
- Toy Story 3 - Incinerator scene:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93JqK32LqW4>
- Wall-E - Cleaning up litter scene:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHH3iSeDBLo>
- Landfill Harmonic - A movie about children in Paraguay who create an orchestra using “trash” to make their musical instruments. Clip of the trailer:
www.landfillharmonicmovie.com

Real Recycling Facility Videos

- “Inside the Prince George's Recycling Center (MD)” & other videos:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Prince+George%27s+County+Materials+Recycling+Facility
- A video from American Disposal Services, the waste management company that has the contract for Arlington County, VA, not D.C. The facility shown is very similar to the facility where DCPS’s waste goes.
<http://www.americandisposal.com/recycling.php>

Take a Field Trip

Take a trip to your schools’ on-site compost bin (if you have one) or a nearby community garden with a composting bin. To identify a compost bin within walking distance to your school, contact Beth Gingold at beth.gingold@dc.gov.

You can also take a trip to your school’s dumpster area to show them where waste goes when it leaves the building.



Outdoor compost bin at Tubman Elementary

(Take a Field Trip – continued)

Tours of facilities may be too much for young children, but here are links if you are interested:

- [Western Branch Composting Facility](#) –To schedule a tour, please call 888-214-8687. www.menv.com.
- [PG County Materials Recycling Facility](#) –To schedule a tour, please call (301) 499-1707.
<http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/WasteManagement/Services/Recycling/MaterialRecycling>.

Donation Resources

Teach your students about charity and reducing waste by encouraging them to donate old clothes or items from home. Here are some charities that accept donations in the D.C. area:

- **Salvation Army Charity:** To donate clothing, furniture and household items, visit www.satruck.org for details, or call 800.728.7825.
- **Goodwill Industries International:** Use the locator to find the nearest career center, retail store, donation site, outlet store or headquarters.
<http://www.goodwill.org/locator/>
- **Interfaith Works Clothing Center:** Organize a drive with your club, congregation, or group. Keep the Interfaith Clothing Center informed of the date(s) and time(s) of the drive and delivery (or pickup if you have a large enough quantity). Please call ICC with questions about volunteering, donations and drives:
301.424.3796. <http://www.iworksmc.org/interfaith-clothing-center/>

Share Your Ideas!

Check out this Pinterest page (not affiliated with DGS):

<https://www.pinterest.com/LilesJennifer/reduce-reuse-recycle-creative-curriculum/>

Use this DGS-created shared Google Doc to share your ideas about Creative Curriculum “centers,” books, and other resources or activities related to recycling. (Note: You must have access to Gmail to use this document.)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12le-TAVonkyvoyLjfTbVNi7e2UzZEyqAM8pW0s3eS8k/edit?usp=sharing>

Thank you! Young recyclers are more likely to become recycling advocates and leaders. Thank you for all you do to prepare the next generation with the skills they will need in the 21st century! See DGS – Healthy Schools for more information and ideas:
<http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-healthy-schools>.