

Environmental Lessons Brought to You

Thurston County educators are here to make environmental education easy. We provide materials and presentations on recycling, natural resources, hazardous waste, and more. You may select one lesson or a series of lessons, each building upon previous presentations.

Our presenters use visual aids of various media, hands-on activities, games, and take-home materials to help students enjoy and retain what they've learned.



Lending Library

Our library has a wide variety of environmental books and media available for all ages. A complete list is available by clicking the "Educational Programs" link on www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org.

To schedule a presentation or borrow from our lending library, contact Colleen Uuereb at 786-5269 or e-mail uuerebc@co.thurston.wa.us.

Other Resources

Visit the Waste and Recovery Center

Students can tour the Waste and Recovery Center at Hawks Prairie to discover how much trash we create here in Thurston County. The tour illustrates how trash can affect the environment and the measures used to protect the environment. Students visit HazoHouse (Thurston County's household hazardous waste facility); the Recycle Center; the methane flare station; the Yard Debris Site; and the leachate pre-treatment pond. To schedule a tour, call Jo Evans at 754-2934 or e-mail evansj@co.thurston.wa.us.

Recycling Programs and Waste Sorts

Staff members are available to help establish or enhance your school recycling or composting program and provide a waste sort. We'll meet you on-site to figure out the best approach for your school's individual needs.

Food and Organics Recycling Service

Schools in Thurston County are realizing just how easy it is to recycle food scraps and soiled paper products from their lunchrooms. Some elementary schools compost on-site, while other schools have their materials hauled away and composted through the "Food to Flowers" program. To learn more about organics recycling in schools, call Allyson Ruppenthal at 357-2491 or e-mail ruppena@co.thurston.wa.us.

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Thurston County
Solid Waste



Environmental Education Program

Elementary Level



Free interactive classroom presentations and more!

- Recycling
- Worm Bins
- Waste Reduction
- Litter
- Household Hazardous Waste
- Solid Waste and Garbage

www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org

Hungry for a Waste-Free Lunch

The class will discuss the natural resources we use to create items and the destination for items thrown "away." Then, students take a look at the choices they can make while shopping for food items in order to be a SMART shopper. Finally, students apply what they've learned by putting together waste-free lunches and snacks.
Grades 1 - 3; 60 minutes



The Magic of Recycling

Students learn where their garbage goes, and are then introduced to the three Rs and the concept of natural resources. The lesson concludes with a recycling sort game in which students practice proper sorting of recyclables and non-recyclables.
Grades K - 2; 45 minutes

Meet Mr. Yuk

Students are introduced to the idea of poisons and what to do when they discover a poisonous item. Example poisons and look-alikes are presented to show how poisons can masquerade as safe products. Students learn about Mr. Yuk and to always ask an adult if they're unsure about a potentially poisonous product.
Grades 1 - 3; 45 minutes

Shop SMART

In this case, SMART stands for "Save Money and Reduce Trash"! Students take a look at choices they can make while shopping, such as choosing durable instead of disposable products. The class will discuss packaging and buying in bulk to reduce waste. Students learn how to protect the environment by being a smart shopper.
Grades 4 - 6; 60 minutes



Closing the Loop

What do the three chasing arrows really mean? By the end of the lesson, students know what the recycling symbol stands for and the importance of closing the recycling loop. After a recycling relay race, students see and handle items made from recycled materials, including a T-shirt made from recycled plastic!
Grades 3 - 6; 60 minutes

Cautions, Warnings, Dangers Oh My!

Students examine labels on empty containers of household hazardous waste and discuss safer alternatives. Students then compare a safer cleaner to a conventional product in a hands-on experiment.
Grades 4 - 6; 60 minutes

Put Litter in Its Place

What is litter and how does it affect our environment? After listening to a story about the consequences of litter in one imaginary town, students use role-play and interaction to learn how litter can create problems in their own communities.
Grades K - 3; 60 minutes

Worms Recycle Naturally

Bring wildlife into your classroom! After learning about the importance of worms in recycling our waste into natural fertilizer, students receive magnifying lenses to examine worms up close.
Grades K - 6; 60 minutes



Battle to Ban the Bag

Students are introduced to the controversies revolving around solid waste. By assuming different roles, students present and debate their viewpoints regarding a potential plastic bag ban in their community.
Grades 4 - 6; 60-90 minutes