

Tips on making a “Green” Lunch

Use Reusable Containers & Silverware

Using re-usable food containers and silverware can reduce the amount of trash from student lunches. It can save you money, because buying prepackaged food is often more expensive. It also allows you to use the same container/utensils for sandwiches and other food over and over again, reducing plastic bag and other litter.

Use Cloth Napkins

Paper napkins and paper towels are used once and thrown away. Reduce litter and waste by reusing a cloth napkin multiple times—throwing it in to a load of clothes you are already washing allows for easy cleanup as well!

Bring a Reusable Water Bottle

Not only is it cheaper and healthier for kids to drink lots of water; it reduces waste caused by buying plastic bottles or juice boxes. Getting kids a personalized water bottle can create ownership and reduce likelihood of losing the bottle while at school.

Compost & Recycling

Consider adding a compost bin in your school yard. Have students separate food items after meals and consider planting native plant or vegetable garden. Also add recycling bins in classrooms and in cafeteria. Consider reducing Styrofoam and other materials that are difficult to biodegrade.

Data Collection

A great activity for students is to keep track of how much waste is collected in the trash cans each day. Students can keep track of the weight on a chart and strive to decrease it over time

Create a Water Barrel

The school cafeteria could also have a water barrel. Similar to a rain barrel, students could instead pour their leftover water from lunch into the barrel. The school could then use this to water plants and grounds. Students often have water leftover in cups or water bottles that they pour down the drain—its better to use it instead!

Discourage Pre-packaged Foods

Schools have vending machines and often sell pre-packaged food rather than taking the time to make fresh food. It's healthier for students, and better for the environment, if other options are offered. Have a place where students can buy fresh fruit, and offer discounts to students who bring re-usable dishes to eat on from home rather than the Styrofoam and disposable plates often used in cafeterias.

Create Awareness

Students often waste food, and needlessly throw things away when it could be saved. Have children bring a container from home, and save lunch leftovers to eat as an after-school snack. Encourage eating all your food and only taking what you really need. Students who learn how to be environmentally friendly in classes and from friends will often take the first steps themselves!