

Green your back-to-school routine

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From new clothes and notebooks, to backpacks and art supplies, preparing your children for going back to school this fall can be not only time-consuming but also costly. With a little thought and some tips from RethinkRecycling.com, consumers can green their back to school routine – saving money and reducing waste.

“In all the back-to-school excitement it’s sometimes easiest to run to the store and stock up on back-to-school essentials, ultimately buying more stuff than is needed and a lot of stuff that you already have,” said Angie Timmons, communications manager for the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board. “By giving careful thought before stocking up for school, consumers can easily find ways to reduce their impact on the environment by using what they have, buying secondhand, or choosing a green alternative.”

As your kids are gearing up to go back to school, consider following some of these suggestions to reduce your impact on the environment and make your dollars go further:

- Supplies – Before dashing to the store, look around at home to find supplies leftover from last year (i.e. pencils, pens and folders), and make a list of what you need after taking inventory of everything you already have. You may be surprised to learn how many supplies you already have. Also, buy notebooks made of recycled content, with paper that is processed without chlorine, and be sure to encourage your child to use both sides of every page.
- Clothes – Kids grow fast and need new clothes often, so when shopping for school clothes this year consider shopping at second-hand stores. You can find great used and unused clothes at a low cost to both you and the environment. And wherever you purchase clothes, be sure to select quality clothing that won’t wear out and can be handed down, whether to other kids in your family or to a thrift store.
- Lunch Box – Lunch is a great time to reduce waste. Use a washable, reusable lunch box rather than a brown bag, and use reusable containers instead of baggies for sandwiches and snacks. Consider buying food in bulk and avoiding individually-packed items – it will not only save you money, but it also reduces the amount of packaging used to store the goods. Believe it or not, packing a healthier lunch produces less waste – an orange will leave behind only compostable “wrappers.”

Above all, when you’re ready to do out with the old and in with the new, remember to recycle. If you don’t already have a recycling station set up, set up a few paper recycling bins in your home and be sure to place one near where your child does homework.

For more information on ways to save and reduce your impact on the environment, visit www.RethinkRecycling.com